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**Bakalářská práce**

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**Noun phrase as noun postmodifier: A man the size of a giant**

Jmenná fráze jako postmodifikátor podstatného jména: A man the size of a giant

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**Poděkování:**

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## **Abstrakt**

Bakalářská práce se zabývá postmodifikací podstatného jména jmennou frází v angličtině, což je nepříliš častá konstrukce.

Praktická část je založena na vyhledávání příkladů této konstrukce v Britském národním korpusu a Mluveném britském národním korpusu. Získané věty jsou tříděny a analyzovány podle hlavy postmodifikující fráze. Jejich popis se věnuje jak stránce syntaktické, jako je poměr postmodifikátorů oddělených čárkou, tak sémantické.

Výsledky potvrzují, že jmenná fráze se jako postmodifikátor podstatného jména se vyskytuje zřídka jak v psaném jazyce, tak v řeči. Ukazují také, že používání tohoto druhu postmodifikace je v praxi omezeno pouze na několik málo hlav postmodifikující fráze.

## **Abstract**

The bachelor's thesis is concerned with the postmodification of a noun by a noun phrase in English, which is an uncommon structure.

The analysis is based on searching for examples of this construction in British National Corpus and Spoken British National Corpus 2014. The gathered sentences are grouped and analysed by the head noun of the postmodifying phrase. Their description deals both with syntax, such as the ratio of postmodifiers separated by a comma, as well as semantics.

The results confirm that a noun phrase functioning as a noun postmodifier occurs infrequently in written language as well as in speech. They also show that the usage of this kind of postmodification is in practice limited to only a few heads of the postmodifying phrase.

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## List of abbreviations

BNC	British National Corpus
CamGEL	The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language
CGEL	A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language
LGSWE	Longman Grammar of Written and Spoken English
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
NP	Noun phrase
N-NP	Noun - noun phrase
Spoken BNC2014	Spoken British National Corpus 2014
PP	Prepositional phrase

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## **1 Introduction**

The present thesis focuses on the minor type of postmodification of a noun by a noun phrase. The aim of this work is to find as many examples of postmodification of a noun by a noun phrase as possible, describe the defining features of this structure and to present its use in writing and speech in detail.

The theoretical part will introduce the noun phrase and its constituents, with a special focus on postmodification. It will include a brief overview of the description of this construction in grammars, as well as a comparison with apposition, which has similar syntactical properties.

The analytical part will focus on one of the subtypes of postmodification by a noun phrase and will examine the particular nouns associated with this type of postmodification in semantic terms and patterns in their use, based on data from the BNC and Spoken BNC2014 corpora.



## 2 Theoretical background

This chapter will introduce the noun phrase and its formal properties, with particular focus on postmodification. Further, it will provide a summary of what the grammar reference books state about the sequence of a noun and a postmodifying phrase. This description will then be expanded by a list of examples taken from these grammar reference books, as well as other secondary sources, which will be commented on.

### 2.1 The noun phrase

The consensus in grammars such as *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* or *Longman Grammar of Written and Spoken English* is that the noun phrase consists of the following components: determiner, premodifier, head, postmodifier and complement. Out of these components, only the head and the determiner are obligatory. Any kind of modification, on the other hand, is optional and serves only to provide additional information.

In CGEL complementation is considered to be a part of modification (e.g. a better story than that) ‘complementing another element in the phrase’ (Quirk et al. 1985, 62, see indirect complements in Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 443). In CamGEL (439) the post-head dependents are divided into modifiers (*a report in the paper*) and complements (*a report on the crash*): ‘The distinction between these two kinds of dependent is essentially the same as in clause structure, but in the NP they are not as clearly differentiated syntactically’ and seven criteria are listed distinguishing between the two syntactic functions, including ‘(a) complements must be licensed by the head noun, (b) scope of anaphora, ... (d) positional mobility, or (e) complements express semantic arguments of the head noun.’ (ibid., 440-443). A complement may be required by the particular head and its valency, e.g. *Fiona’s reliance on public support* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 440). CGEL states the following about distinguishing modification from complementation:

Although complementing elements may be optional, such elements differ semantically from other optional elements (eg most modifiers) in that the omission of complementation [...] implies that some element of meaning in a preceding word is ‘unsatisfied,’

and therefore has to be provided through context. It must be admitted, however, that this criterion is not always clear-cut, since the need for semantic ‘satisfaction’ is a matter of degree (Quirk et al. 1985, 66).

Any noun phrase should have some sort of determining word to show what kind of reference the phrase has (Quirk et al. 1985, 64). In the case that no such word seems to be present, the phrase is considered to have a zero or null article in the place of a determiner. This function is most commonly fulfilled by the definite and indefinite article, possessive pronouns, or quantifiers such as *some, all, any*, etc.

The head is generally thought of as the most important element of the phrase. Not only does it define the type of the phrase, but the other constituents of the phrase are syntactically dependent on it. Moreover, the head noun is the most important element semantically, as it forms the informational core of the phrase, while the optional modifiers add more information of the periphery.

There has been some discourse over the definition of the head (for the discussion see e.g. Keizer 2007, 9-21), as several different approaches emerged, all producing varying findings on what the head of the NP should be. These approaches developed various tests to determine the head in difficult cases, such as using the subject-verb concord (*a large number of people are sceptical about...*), the semantic restrictions of the verbs possibly associated with the phrase, obligatoriness, determiner-head agreement, or stress. However, it was found that none of these criteria provided a fool-proof method of finding the head alone and that syntactic evidence often contradicted semantic evidence (Keizer 2007, 21).

When describing the head of a noun phrase, it is important to recognize that despite its name, the NP does not necessarily have to be headed by a noun, but also by pronouns, e.g. *anybody can see that* or partially converted adjectives, e.g. *show me how the impossible can be possible* (Biber and Quirk 1999, 97).

Unlike the determiner and the head, modification is primarily an optional element of the phrase. We distinguish between the pre-modifier, occurring before the head, and post-modifier, occurring after the head.

### 2.1.1 Postmodification of the noun phrase

Postmodification (sometimes referred to as post-head modification) is, as stated above, an optional element of a phrase following the head. As CGEL points out, in the noun phrase the head can be modified by multiple prepositional and noun phrases embedded into the NP and each other at once, meaning it can potentially form infinitely long noun phrases via embedding (Quirk et al. 1985, 43). Quirk et al. later add to their assessment: ‘It is true of [...] noun phrases, that one-word elements tend to precede the head, whereas multi-word element tend to follow it.’ (Quirk et al. 1985, 63). This is known as the end-weight principle.

Postmodification is realized by various formal means. These include the adjective phrase:

*the people present* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 445);

*poet laureate* (Ibid.);

*all things Irish* (Ibid.);

the prepositional phrase: *the church near the river* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446);

the noun phrase:

*the results last year* (Ibid.);

*houses this side of the lake* (Ibid.);

and some kinds of subordinate clauses:

the relative clause, e.g. *Where’s the book I lent you?* (Ibid.);

the infinitival clause, e.g. *Kim is the person to do the job.* (Ibid.);

the gerund-participial clause, e.g. *People living near the site will be seriously disadvantaged.* (Ibid.);

the past-participial clause, e.g. *She came across some letters written by her grandmother.* (Ibid.)<sup>1</sup>

CamGEL formally classifies examples postmodified by a single preposition without a complement such as *the floor below* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446) as postmodification by preposition phrase. This approach is different from CGEL, which interprets these as adverbial phrases, which can be seen in the sentence *The*

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<sup>1</sup> Based on corpus data, the frequency of postmodification itself ranges from ‘relatively rare in conversation’ (nearly 20 000 postmodifiers per million words in conversation) ‘to extremely common in academic prose’ – nearly 90 000 postmodifiers per million words. In terms of distribution of the particular formal types, ‘prepositional phrases consistently make up 65-80% of all postmodifiers in all registers’. (Biber and Quirk 1999, 606)

*people behind* were talking all the time. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1293), which CGEL identifies as a typical example of a postmodification by an adverb phrase.

It states:

[W]e recognize some such paraphrase as (...) ‘*The people* who were sitting *behind*’. In some cases, the postmodifying item could be regarded as a preposition with omitted complement: ‘*The people* who were sitting *behind* us.’ (...) But since most examples can be explained as adverbial and few as prepositional, it seems best to regard the few that must be prepositional as being modelled upon the adverbial ones. (Ibid.)

CGEL acknowledges the possibility of interpreting examples like *The people behind* were talking all the time as prepositions the way CamGEL does, but CGEL chooses to approach them as an adverb phrase.

In addition, a postmodifying noun phrase may function as apposition, which differs from the type we are primarily concerned with. This will be further discussed in chapter 2.4.1.

## 2.2 Classification in academic reference grammar books

The ‘N-postmodifying NP’ structure has not been thoroughly described in many grammars. This may stem from its curious position in syntax, as multiple noun phrases following one another are commonly linked using prepositions, conjunctions or other elements. The absence of these linking elements gives the sequence similar realization to apposition. On the one hand, the structure lacks other crucial features to firmly classify it as such, most notably the identity of reference of both constituents. There are several grammars which offer some insight on the matter with varying views on it. According to Dušková et al. (2009), it can be classified as a kind of apposition, using the examples *a magnificent crisp lettuce*, *the size of a football* as nonrestrictive apposition separated by a comma and *a daughter your age* as restrictive apposition. On the other hand, Dušková et al. point out that:

Tato spojení však postrádají základní významový rys apozice, užší či širší významovou identitu jejich členů, vyplývající z totožnosti mimojazykové reference (dvojího či víceroého označení téhož). Je tedy oprávněnější je řadit k přívlastku, o čemž svědčí i možnost variant *s of*, srov. *a diamond ring of*

*the value of two hundred pounds, I have a daughter of your age.* (Dušková et al. 2009, 13.62.3)<sup>2</sup>

CGEL briefly mentions postmodification by a NP along with postmodification by adverb phrase, stating that ‘[s]ome noun phrases of measure, denoting size, age, etc, can also be postposed: A man *the size of a giant* came up to me. Somebody *her age* shouldn't do such strenuous exercises.’ (Quirk et al. 1985, 1293)

However, the reason for including such instances as *a man the size of a giant* among postmodifying adverb phrases is not clear, as there are separate sections devoted to all other forms of postmodification (finite, nonfinite and prepositional clauses), but not for NPs and adverb phrases, and only two examples of postmodification by NP are provided.

A possible link would be through the semantics of postmodifying adverbs: ‘Postmodifying time adverbs appear to be limited to those denoting time position or time duration.’ (Quirk et al. 1985, 453) Additionally, CGEL lists adverbs denoting place as well, e.g. *the way ahead, your friend here*. These conditions loosely resemble the ones given for postmodification by an NP, where CGEL states that ‘[s]ome noun phrases of measure, denoting size, age, etc. can also be postposed’ (Quirk et al. 1985, 1293). Based on the possibility of placing these noun phrases after the head noun, a parallel is drawn to adverb phrases, which also allow this position.

CamGEL mentions NPs as one of five forms that can postmodify a noun phrase. It also mentions similar semantic limitations to the conditions listed by CGEL. It further distinguishes between postmodification, e.g. *a man my age, shoes this size* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446); apposition, e.g. *She sang in the opera ‘Carmen’*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 447), and ‘non-referential distributive indefinite nouns’ in phrases such as *fifty miles an hour* or *ten dollars a head* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446). By discussing appositive NPs separately, it is clear that CamGEL does not consider this type of postmodification to be apposition, but merely sharing the same basic realization form.

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<sup>2</sup> These structures lack the basic semantic feature of apposition, the more or less identical meaning of its members, stemming from the identity of the extralinguistic reference. It is therefore better justified to classify it as a modification, which is also confirmed by the possibility of variation with *of*, cf. *a diamond ring of the value of two hundred pounds, I have a daughter of your age*.

*A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* by Otto Jespersen uses different terminology than the other grammars mentioned above. The head noun in the phrase is referred to as ‘the principal’ and the modifier as ‘the adjunct’, specifically ‘pre-adjunct’ and ‘post-adjunct’, depending on their position in relation to the principal. He uses the term ‘substantival group’ to refer to a noun phrase specifically as a post-adjunct to another noun, as it does not appear anywhere else in the volume. The grammar states the following:

A peculiar kind of descriptive substantival group post-adjuncts has developed in recent times from the predicative use (...) in ‘when he was my age / what colour are his eyes’ etc. (Jespersen 1928, 389)

In his classification of this construction among semi-predicative post-adjuncts, Jespersen acknowledges the possibility of placing the postmodifying clause in predication as well as ‘attributive’ use with another noun. From this we can infer that NP postmodifiers developed from the nominal parts of verbonominal predicative structures. He further suggests that this structure is a fairly new feature in English at the time of writing (1913).

While his examples are all from works of literature published in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are examples recorded in OED as early as the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, such as this sentence from a text by Henry Power from 1664: ‘So the same Cylinder of 29 inches is raised by a Column of the height of the whole Atmosphære it self.’ (OED, height | hight, n.) This structure therefore must have been present in the language for over two hundred years in Jespersen’s time, so it can hardly be considered ‘recent’. At the same time, it is possible that despite existing for a considerable amount of time beforehand, it only grew in popularity in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The example found in OED differs from the ones presented by Jespersen in the fact that the preposition *of* appears additionally before the postmodifying phrase. While it may seem that this distinction makes this into a postmodification by a prepositional phrase, there is a simple test to prove the additional preposition is only optional. Going by Jespersen’s claim of the structure having developed from the predicative use, the phrase should have the ability to stand in a sentence with or without it without disturbing the word order or its acceptability. His own example, *when he was my age* (Ibid.) is equally acceptable with the extra preposition: *when he was of my age*.

Finally, *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* does not comment on this structure in any way.

### 2.3 List of examples

The previous section discussed how grammars described postmodification by an NP. As the description is rather brief and scarce, what follows is a lists of all examples of this type of postmodification encountered the above-mentioned grammars and in further secondary sources. Where the examples were sourced from authentic texts, the year of publishing is included in brackets. Square brackets indicate that the preposition inside is given as optional and the source listed both options as correct.

The purpose of the list to serve as a source for the formal description of the construction in 2.4.

In CGEL:

A man the size of a giant came up to me. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1293)

Somebody her age shouldn't do such strenuous exercises. (Ibid.)

In CamGEL:

a man my age (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446)

shoes this size (Ibid.)

the results last year (Ibid.)

houses this side of the lake (Ibid.)

In Dušková et al.:

a magnificent crisp lettuce, the size of a football (Dušková et al. 2009, 13.62.3)

a diamond ring, [of the] value [of] two hundred pounds (Ibid.)

I have a daughter [of] your age. (Ibid.)

In Jespersen:

An old gentleman held a boy in his arms about the age of little Rawdon (1890) (Jespersen 1928, 389)

many a man twice his age (1900) (Ibid.)

the usual boy's weakness for women twice his age (1905) (Ibid.)

You never see fingers this shape in Russia. (1905) (Ibid.)  
Many towns the size of ours were burned. (1887) (Ibid.)  
It left a hole the size of a wafer. (1906) (Ibid.)  
Nowhere could I discern a cloud the size of a man's hand. (1912) (Ibid.)  
a rope thick enough for a couple of men his size and weight (1895) (Ibid.)  
The house next door should fly on fire. (1896) (Jespersen 1928, 390)

In OED:

Examples were searched in OED based on the head nouns of the postmodifying phrases attested in the grammar books and nouns expressing similar properties (*size, colour, shape, width, shape, height, length, age*).

'Why don't you hit one of your size?' said the boy. (1841) (OED, size n.1)

a frame the exact size of the window (1893) (Ibid.)

Clean away part of that unction, in the middle of it, about the width of half-a-crown. (1775) (OED, width, n.)

They ware a kind of leather breech clout (...) the width of a Common pocket Handkerchief or Something Smaller and longer. (1806) (Ibid.)

the side of the body with a plumbous lateral stripe, of about the width of the eye (1892) (Ibid.)

Stakes or Poles of about a mans highth (1673) (OED, height | highth, n.)

So the same Cylinder of 29 inches is raised by a Column of the height of the whole Atmosphære it self. (1664) (Ibid.)

In de Mönnink:

I discovered a hole this morning the size of an apple. (de Mönnink 2000, 107)

I discovered a hole the size of an apple this morning. (Ibid.)

A car was stolen yesterday that colour. (Ibid.)

A girl appeared [of] your age, smoking a cigarette. (Ibid.)

A rock was found [of] that same shape. (Ibid.)

## 2.4 Syntactic properties

Based on the examples collected above, we can infer the syntactic properties needed for a structure to be classified as a postmodification by an NP and which properties are commonly present.



This minor type of postmodification can be characterized as having two broad subtypes based on the structure of the postmodifying NP.

**The first broad subtype** employs an article (typically the definite article) followed by a head noun with an embedded prepositional phrase with the preposition *of*, such as *a man the size of a giant*. The main head noun can be premodified or postmodified by other means (meaning the head noun can be separated from the postmodifying NP):

*a plumbous lateral stripe, of about the width of the eye* (OED, width, n.)

*part of that unction, in the middle of it, about the width of half-a-crown* (Ibid.).

Similarly, the head noun of the postmodifying phrase can also be premodified by an adjective or an adverb *about*. Both these attested modifiers express the un/certainty about the size (*exact x about*):

*a frame the exact size of the window* (OED, size n.1)

*a boy in his arms about the age of little Rawdon* (Jespersen 1928, 389)

*Stakes or Poles of about a mans highth* (OED, height | highth, n.).

The examples indicate that there is some variety in the placement of the premodifier, as *exact* is placed after the article, but *about* precedes it. If the preposition *of* is present, *about* is placed after it.

Some historical examples show the use of the preposition *of* before the article preceding the head of the postmodifying phrase. These examples are:

*a Column of the height of the whole Atmosphære it self* (OED, height | hight, n.)

*a plumbous lateral stripe, of about the width of the eye* (OED, width, n.).

The grammar books above do not include the option with *of* in this position, however Dušková et al. (2009) demonstrate that both options are possible, as seen in *a diamond ring, (of the) value (of) two hundred pounds*. This raises the question of whether both forms developed at the same time, or if one emerged from the other. Additionally, we can ask if there is any diachronic trend in terms of preference for one option or the other, and if both options are still in use nowadays.

Another crucial feature of the first subtype is the embedded prepositional phrase. The following examples include *of* before the head noun, but since they have no embedded prepositional phrase, the preposition cannot be omitted, unlike in postmodification by an NP:

*A cavern of a remarkable width has been discovered* (OED, width, n.).

*A Glass of the common Shape* (OED, shape, n.1)

As there is no embedded prepositional phrase, these examples cannot be instances of the first subtype. Similarly, they cannot be instances of the second subtype either, because the preposition *of* cannot be omitted, therefore they are simply postmodified by a single prepositional phrase. The realization of the examples given above seems similar to another phrase from the list: *Stakes or Poles of about a mans highth* (OED, height | highth, n.). While the postmodifier *of about a man's height* begins with the preposition *of* just like *of a remarkable width and of the common Shape*, the crucial difference is that in *of about a man's height*, the preposition is optional. This makes it an example of the second broad subtype, only with an unusual word order.

In terms of definiteness, all examples of the first broad subtype in Section 2.3 contain a definite article before the head of the postmodifying NP. As the subtype contains an embedded prepositional phrase which further postmodifies the head of the postmodifying NP, the definite article signals a cataphoric reference. However, this principle curiously does not apply to main head nouns which are also postmodified.

The nouns attested as heads of postmodifying NPs of the first subtype are *size*, *side*, *age*, *value*, *width*, and *height*.

**The second broad subtype** lacks an article and of the determiner takes the form of a possessive or demonstrative pronoun followed by a noun, such as *a daughter your age* (Dušková et al. 2009, 13.62.3) or *shoes this size* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446). Optionally, the preposition *of* may be included, which is pointed out in Dušková et al. by a variation of the previous example: *I have a daughter of your age*. (Dušková et al. 2009, 13.62.3) This variation is also attested in example *Why don't you hit one of your size*? (OED, size, n.)

The nouns attested as heads of the second subtype are *size*, *age*, *year*, *value*, *age*, *shape*, *weight*, *door*, *colour*.

Additionally, there is a structure which seems to be following the same pattern on the surface, but is not in fact a noun postmodified by a noun phrase. This is the case in structures where there are noun phrases with a multiplier in a predeterminer position, e.g. *I earn three times the amount Bill does*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 418) This means that the modifier *three times* actually modifies the head noun *amount* rather than vice versa, and is therefore a premodifier rather than a postmodifier.

As the postmodifying phrase is syntactically dependent on the main head noun, it is necessary for the head and the NP to be in the same sentence constituent, otherwise the NP would not be able to postmodify the head. This can be seen in the following example: *the dirt rubs off and leaves the hand quite a good colour* (Jespersen 1928, 389). In this sentence, *the hand* functions as an object, but *quite a good colour* functions as an object complement. As has been mentioned in Section 2.1, the complement may be required by the particular valency of the verb or the head of the phrase, as is the case here. Although the sentence needs both constituents to be complete, they are clearly separate units in sentence structure.

#### 2.4.1 Comparison with Apposition

The main feature of apposition is the aforementioned semantic identity of the two elements (Dušková et al. 2009, 13.62.3). In the sentence *This is my husband George* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002 447) it is clear that *my husband* refers to the same person as *George*, and these two constituents can function more or less equally well in the sentence in terms of both syntax and semantics, if the other were to be removed. This is documented in Dušková et al. as well: ‘O koordináční povaze apozičního spojení svědčí skutečnost, že jeho syntaktická funkce ve větě zůstává stejná, je-li zastoupeno pouze jedním ze svých členů.’ (Dušková et al. 2009, 13.6)<sup>3</sup>

When compared to the sentence *A man the size of a giant came up to me.* (Quirk et al. 1985, 1293), the constituents *a man* and *the size of a giant* each obviously do not refer to the same entities. Additionally, if the latter were to stand in the sentence alone, the resulting utterance *The size of a giant came up to me.* is semantically unacceptable, and its syntactic acceptability is questionable.

#### 2.4.2 Variation in syntax

The variant without an embedded *of*-PP can be identified by the possibility of inserting the preposition *of* between the head noun and the postmodifier, such as *shoes of this size* (Dušková et al., 13.62.3). It is important to note, however, that for expressions such as *She was a woman of her age, (...) a child of the Renaissance.* (OED, age, n.) and many others predominantly using the noun *age*, removing this

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<sup>3</sup> The coordinative nature of apposition is supported by the fact that its syntactical function in the sentence remains the same, if it is represented by only one of its constituents.

preposition changes the meaning of the phrase as it signalizes a relationship equivalent to the accusative case.

In her study of mobility of immediate constituents of the noun phrase, Inge de Mönnink uses several examples to explore moving the postmodifier further away from the head. She uses the term ‘floating deferred modifier’ as it ‘occurs in a position outside the boundaries of its mother constituent (either fronted or deferred)’ and follows the head (de Mönnink 2000, 25). The informants in the study were asked to determine the acceptability of the following examples:

(42) *A girl appeared (of) your age, smoking a cigarette.*

(43) *A rock was found (of) that same shape.*

The results were as follows:

Sentences (42) and (43) were offered both with and without the preposition *of* in the interviews. With *of* the sentences were judged as acceptable by all informants, although some mentioned that they would prefer the prepositional phrase to immediately follow the head. Without the preposition, about half of the informants accepted the sentence. The other half rephrased the sentence by including the modifying NP in a prepositional phrase or relative clause. (...) A floating deferred modifier can be realized by a noun phrase, although realization by either prepositional phrase or clause is clearly preferred. (de Mönnink 2000, 107)

Mönnink’s study offers some insight as to why postmodification by an NP does not seem to be used often, but most importantly it deals with the possibilities of word order of complex NPs. Both examples (42) and (43) use the second subtype of the postmodifying NP, though there is a marked difference in their verbs. Example (42) uses a verb which have a lexical or copular function, whereas *found* in example (43) can only have a lexical one. This leads to possible ambiguity in example (42), where the syntax allows both readings of the verb: *A girl appeared to be my age, and she was smoking a cigarette.* and *A girl, who was my age, appeared while smoking a cigarette.* Despite these variations, there is no difference noted in the acceptability of each sentence. As for the first subtype using an embedded *of*-PP, another example from de Mönnink’s study shows that it can be separated from the head noun without any change in meaning as perceived by informants in the study: *A car was stolen yesterday that colour.* (de Mönnink 2000, 107)

## **2.5 Semantic properties**

The N-NP structure is specific not by its syntax, but also by its semantics, as this type of postmodifying structure appears to be used only to express particular physical qualities. CamGEL states that ‘modifiers with NP form are limited to those denoting age, size, and similar properties.’ (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 446) CGEL adds measure to this list (Quirk et al. 1985, 1293). As is evident in the examples provided, the head of the postmodifying phrase is often a noun with fairly general meaning. It is one of the objectives of this study to enquire into which nouns are attested heading the postmodifying NP.

### **3 Material and Method**

The examples used were extracted from the British National Corpus version 2 accessed through the KonText interface at [www.korpus.cz](http://www.korpus.cz), and the Spoken British National Corpus 2014, accessed through Sketch Engine, available at [www.sketchengine.eu](http://www.sketchengine.eu). The specific tags for BNC used were acquired in the official Users Reference Guide provided online by the University of Oxford (Burnard n.d.). In regard to Spoken BNC2014, Sketch Engine does not use the same tagset as BNC, instead it uses the Penn TreeBank tagset with custom modification, available at the Sketch Engine website. (Sketch Engine n.d.) For queries set for a specific head noun in the postmodifying NP, the results were filtered out manually to include only the examples of the N-NP structure.

## 4 Analysis

The analysis is focused on the first major subtype of NP postmodification characterized by an embedded *of*-prepositional phrase. Each section deals with a head noun of the postmodifying phrase and describes the examples from the corpora with that specific head noun.

### 4.1 Problematic structures

In the general searches that were not restricted by using a specific noun in the postmodifying phrase, the search engine picked up a large number of false positive results. This was especially true for the subtype lacking the embedded PP, since the query was significantly shorter, hence a match more likely to appear in contexts completely irrelevant to our research. Examples of such problematic contexts are nonrestrictive relative clauses not separated by a comma or denoted by a demonstrative pronoun following the embedded postmodifying NP, and prepositional phrases preceding a noun phrase, where the noun serving as a complement for the prepositional phrase created a false-positive match for the query (e.g. *Over the centuries the age of steam gave way to electricity*). In a few select cases, these matches ended up being true, as the prepositional phrase actually modified a noun which was then modified further by the following noun phrase. The last problematic structure was a NP premodified by a quantifier, most commonly *times*, which has the same realization as the N-NP structure on surface level, but as has been discussed before, the multiplier does not serve as the head of the NP, therefore these examples cannot be included.

### 4.2 Size

There was no universal query to filter out the examples of postmodification by NP, due to the wide lexical variety in individual examples. Instead, the searches were conducted in smaller, more specific queries, with the head noun of the postmodifying phrase set. The head nouns were chosen according to the description and examples found in grammars, analogically extended to other nouns expressing similar properties.

**Table 1: Total number of results**

Head noun	In BNC	In Spoken BNC2014	Total
size	239	12	251
colour	32	0	32
length	11	1	12
width	7	0	7
height	4	0	4
shape	2	0	2
breadth	1	0	1
depth	1	0	1
age	0	0	0
weight	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>310</b>

**Table 2: Results in BNC**

Head noun of postmodifying NP	No determiner + no comma	No determiner + comma	Determiner + no comma	Determiner + comma	Total in BNC
size	107	5	98	29	239
colour	20	3	7	2	32
length	1	0	9	1	11
width	0	0	6	1	7
height	0	0	3	1	4
shape	0	0	2	0	2
breadth	0	0	1	0	1
depth	0	0	1	0	1
age	0	0	0	0	0
weight	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>297</b>



**Table 3: Percentage of comma usage in written examples**

Head noun	Instances with comma	Instances without comma	Ratio of comma usage
size	34	198	14.7%
colour	5	27	15.6%
length	1	9	10%
width	1	5	16.7%
height	1	3	25%
shape	0	2	0%
breadth	0	1	0%
depth	0	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>14%</b>

The word *size* was the most common head noun of the postmodifying phrase as per Table 1. The following query was entered as a search: [tag="N.\*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="size"] [word="of"] [tag="N.\*"] within <s/>

The AT0 tag stands for any article. The last tag, within <s/>, ensured that the whole phrase was contained in one sentence. This search yielded 131 lines of results, 104 lines of which were relevant, as they actually contained the postmodification by an NP, such as to *a town the size of Coventry* (BNC). Additionally, there were 17 lines out of the 131 where the position of the first noun was filled by the word *times*:

*Outer and Inner Mongolia together are more than 13 times the size of mainland Britain.* (Ibid.)

The noun *times* is not a true head of the noun phrase, but rather a multiplier in a predeterminer position, as discussed in Section 2.4. These lines were not analysed further. The number of relevant results shows the incidence of 0.94 ipm (instances per million words).

This search was then repeated with an added comma between the main head noun and the postmodifying NP, the query modified accordingly:

[tag="N.\*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="size"] [word="of"] [tag="N.\*"] ] within <s/>

This search yielded 16 results and three out of those contained postmodification by NP. They are:

*an area of one and a half million hectares, the size of Switzerland* (Ibid.)

*balloon-like tadpoles, the size of half-crowns* (Ibid.)

*a monotonously smooth plateau, the size of Wales* (Ibid.)

I further searched for examples with an article or predeterminer preceding the last noun in the search. The query for it included an additional square bracket with the options for any article (AT0), a possessive pronoun acting as a determiner (DPS), and a ‘general determiner-pronoun: i.e. a determiner-pronoun which is not a DTQ or an AT0’ (DT0) (Burnard n.d.). The curly bracket then allowed repeating of the previous tag, which ensured that the query would not reject an example, were it to have a quantifier as well as a determiner, in cases such as *all their trouble* or *all the five boys* (CGEL, 253). The query was the following:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="size"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"]{1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

It yielded 133 lines of results, 88 lines of those were relevant, giving the ipm of 0.79. Examples of these results are:

*A hole the size of a football* (Ibid.)

*a finger the size of a rolling-pin* (Ibid.)

There were 10 more lines with the word *times* as the first noun (position of the main head noun) and 1 line with *per cent* in the position of the main head noun. These 11 lines were not analysed further.

The previous search was then also modified to include a comma between the main head noun and the postmodifying phrase:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="size"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"]{1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

It yielded 54 results, 16 of which were relevant and were further analysed, such as *a little thing, the size of a hazelnut* (Ibid.)

As the evidence from the examples in secondary sources shows, it is possible to add a predeterminer or a premodifier to the head of the postmodifying phrase, namely words *about* and *exactly*. Separate searches were carried out to confirm whether these two occur with the N-NP structure in the corpora. For the adverb *exactly*, there were no instances of it in BNC. On the other hand, *about* was present in the corpus in 28 instances (for the complete list see Appendix):

*a hole about the size of Lancashire* (Ibid.)

*little scuttling beasts about the size of a hen* (Ibid.).

In total, there were 239 results extracted from BNC, which amounts to ipm of 1.9. Seven results were from the spoken section of BNC (not to be confused with Spoken BNC2014). They were included in counts for BNC as examples

without a comma separating the main head noun and the postmodifying NP as they were found in those searches. The results, however, could not be included in statistics about comma usage (Table 3) as they were not examples of written text and were only transcribed with minimal punctuation.

The queries had to be further adapted for the different tagset in Spoken BNC2014, as has been mentioned above. This tagset is more general and does not match exactly the highly specialised categories of the tagset developed for the written version of BNC. The first query searched for the option where the preposition *of* is directly followed by a noun:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="size"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

The last tag ‘within <u/>’ is the equivalent of ‘within <s/>’ used in BNC, but it stands for ‘utterance’ instead of ‘sentence’ to reflect the nature of a spoken corpus. The DT tag stands for determiner (Sketch Engine n.d.). It yielded 6 results, 5 of which were relevant and 1 line containing the word *times* in the position of the first noun. This gives us the ipm of 0.42 – less than half of 0.94, which was the incidence in its written counterpart. Examples include:

*an area the size of Britain* (BNC)

*those really tiny cans the size of Red Bull* (Ibid.)

The second query included an article or other determiner before the last noun position:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="size"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

There were nine lines of results, out of which seven instances were relevant and one instance used the word *times* in the position of the first noun. Among the relevant instances were the following:

*a brain the size of a pea* (Ibid.)

*a jar the size of your head* (Ibid.)

There were 12 examples collected from the Spoken BNC2014 in total, with the incidence of 1.01 ipm. The ratio of raw results from the corpus and relevant results which were then further analysed varied greatly. The comparison of all nouns tested in this study can be found in Table 4.

**Table 4: Success rate of queries in BNC**

Head noun of postmodifying NP	No determiner, no comma	No determiner, comma	Determiner, no comma	Determiner, comma	Total
size*	104/131 79.4%	3/16 18.75%	88/133 66.2%	16/54 29.6%	211/334 63.2%
colour	20/23 87%	3/10 30%	7/9 77.8%	2/8 25%	32/50 64%
length	1/14 7.1%	0/22 0%	9/44 20.5%	1/23 4.3%	11/103 10.7%
width	0/0 0%	0/0 0%	6/10 60%	1/7 14.3%	7/24 29.2%
height	0/1 0%	0/0 0%	3/7 42.9%	1/11 9.1%	4/19 21.1%
shape	0/1 0%	0/5 0%	2/8 25%	0/15 0%	2/29 6.9%
depth	0/4 0%	0/8 0%	1/9 11.1%	0/4 0%	1/25 4%
breadth	0/2 0%	0/1 0%	1/1 100%	0/5 0%	1/9 11.1%
age	0/4 0%	0/11 0%	0/4 0%	0/10 0%	0/29 0%
weight	0/5 0%	0/7 0%	0/3 0%	0/8 0%	0/23 0%

\*The searches for the quantifier *about* or premodifier *exactly* are not included in this chart in the interest of uniformity.

The examples from all the above-mentioned searches were then added and analysed (for the complete list, see Appendix). In total, there were 251 instances of postmodification by NP with the head noun *size* in the corpora.

When we compare the number of examples based on the presence or absence of a determiner or article present *of* and the last noun, we find that there are 117 examples (46.6%) without an article or determiner (e.g. *a club the size of øNewcastle*) and 134 (53.4%) with either an article or a determiner (e.g. *flower the size of a bucket*), which means that the group with an article or a determiner is slightly larger. There was an option for a result to have, for example, more than one predeterminer, as the search allowed for multiple, but all of the results for *size* which had an article or a determiner happened to have only one or the other. In terms of distribution of articles or determiners, the indefinite article is by far the most common, with 117 instances (87.3% of all examples with articles or determiners), such as:

*a predator the size of an eagle* (BNC)

*lid the size of a marble* (Ibid.)

*cards about the size of a postcard* (Ibid.)

The definite article (*an area the size of the house*) appears in eight instances (6%), and the remaining nine instances (6.7%) used a possessive or demonstrative pronoun as a determiner:

*a spider the size of her thumbnail* (BNC)

*a massive archway the size of this room* (Spoken BNC2014).

Based on this evidence, the conclusion can be made that the reference of the last nouns (following *of*) of the postmodifying NP is in most cases indefinite among the phrases where there is a determiner present.

As has been mentioned above, 117 examples have no article or are considered to have zero article, the difference being that the term zero article is used for common nouns, while no article is used for proper nouns. CGEL states that:

The label 'zero' is appropriate in the case of common nouns which have article contrast, eg: *music* as opposed to *the music* [...] If, however, we disregard special grammatical environments like *the Sid I mean is tall* (cf 5.64), proper nouns have no article contrast (*Sid*/\**the Sid*), and will therefore be said to have 'no article'. (Quirk et al. 1985, 246)

The realization of zero article and no article, however, appears identical in text.

When considering postmodifying common nouns which were not preceded by a determiner, all examples but one were in plural form. The one exception was *a fish pond the size of lake* (BNC). The reason for the omission of the article is unclear.

In regard to the article used before the head noun of the postmodifying NP, all 251 results from both BNC and Spoken BNC2014 use the definite article, e.g. *leaves the size of dinner plates* (Ibid.)

It is also clear that in terms of punctuation, a comma is used to separate the postmodifying clause from the main head noun in a small minority of cases. Out of 232 examples collected from the written corpus, 34 cases, or 14.7% used the comma. As per Table 3, this was slightly above the total 14%, calculated from all written examples found in BNC. When taking into consideration only the three nouns with more than 10 occurrences for more accurate results – size, colour, length – the ratio of postmodifying NPs separated by a comma rises by 0.6% to 14.6%.

In fourteen cases, the query did not actually pick up the noun which was the main head noun of the NP being postmodified, but rather another constituent of

postmodification of the main head noun (the actual N-NP structure underlined, the nouns caught by the query in bold):

*a feature on **Mercury** the size of Sri Lanka would be a featureless blur* (Ibid.)

*[t]he army occupies an area of land the size of Torness turbine hall* (Ibid.)

*She also wore a diamond brooch at her **waist**, the size of a buckler.*(Ibid.)

The additional postmodifying constituents can be generally split into two groups: partitives and adverbial adjuncts. Partitive constructions allow for stating a quantity of an uncountable entity. Six examples out of the fourteen were partitive (partitive structures underlined):

*ancient blocks of ice the size of Yorkshire* (Ibid.)

*a lump of hard flesh, the size of a golf ball* (Ibid.)

*an area of land the size of Torness turbine hall* (Ibid.)

*small filets of lean meat the size of quails' breasts* (Ibid.)

*places where scraps of lambs the size of rabbits were bought* (Ibid.)

*A piece of this material, neutronium, the size of a pinhead* (Ibid.)

The rest of the examples (eight) were adverbial adjuncts. There were seven adjuncts of place, which accounted for one half of all fourteen postmodifiers separating the main head noun from the postmodifying NP. Adverbial adjuncts of place specified where the entity denominated by the main head noun was located, in examples such as (adjuncts of place underlined):

*the smallest woodpecker of the region, the size of a Hedgesparrow* (Ibid.)

*a lump beneath my left arm, the size of a pigeon's egg.* (Ibid.)

The last example with a deferred postmodifier is the following:

*an area of one and a half million hectares, the size of Switzerland.* (Ibid.) This example can be classified as an adverbial adjunct of measure.

An interesting division arises when we consider the semantics of the nouns which follow the preposition *of* in postmodifying noun phrases. Two major groups emerged, which together encompassed 85.3% of examples (214 examples). The first group, over half of the examples – 155 examples, or 61.8% – are common nouns or NPs denoting some sort of object, a body part, or a place, such as:

*feet the size of dinner platters* (Ibid.)

*a piece of glass the size of your fist* (Ibid.)

*small balls the size of walnuts* (Ibid.)

*the great church, the size of a cathedral* (Ibid.).

The second major group are proper nouns denoting place names: 59 instances (23.5% of all examples with *size*) including countries, cities, natural landmarks or man-made structures of importance (*Wembley stadium, Carnegie Hall*).

*an area the size of Europe* (Ibid.)

*blisters the size of Brighton* (Ibid.)

*a soup bowl the size of Wembley Stadium* (Ibid.)

This group makes up the 69.4% majority of proper nouns, of which there are 85 in total.

Over half of the proper nouns marking place names are related to the United Kingdom and locations in it: 34 lines (57.6%) out of 59 were related. The most frequent nouns among them were *England* and *Wales*, both appearing seven times (including one instance of *North Wales*). Curiously, *Britain* appeared 3 times:

*catering for a market the size of Britain* (BNC)

*covering an area the size of Great Britain* (BNC)

*rule an area the size of Britain* (Spoken BNC2014)

However, *the UK* (or any of its iterations) did not appear at all. Other place names related to the UK included individual counties (*iceberg the size of Buckinghamshire*), cities or towns (*cities the size of Glasgow, Bristol and Hull*), natural landmarks (*hill the size of Ben Nevis*), and man-made structures (*soup bowl the size of Wembley stadium*). Out of the 25 lines containing place names which were not related to the United Kingdom, eleven were other countries, eight were cities or towns, and six were other geographical names:

*a forest the size of Switzerland* (BNC)

*enough to power the city the size of Amsterdam* (Ibid.)

*a grudge the size of Mount Everest* (Ibid.).

The remaining examples form the following groups:

17 examples compared the main head to animals or their body parts (twelve of which were common nouns and five proper nouns):

*a rat the size of a rabbit* (Ibid.)

*bacteria the size of hamsters* (Ibid.)

*birds the size of Ptarmigan and Oystercatcher* (Ibid.)

*white flakes the size of cats' tails* (Ibid.).

Eight proper nouns are groups of people – in this case specifically companies and football clubs – and one is a name of a ship. Examples include:

*a ship the size of the Ocean Empress (Ibid.)*

*a club the size of Everton (Ibid.)*

Six proper nouns referred to individual people:

*a man the size of Nathan Bryce (Ibid.)*

*a tower the size of Claire (Ibid.);*

two examples were of groups of people – common nouns:

*an organization the size of the health service (Ibid.)*

*infantry the size of a regiment (Ibid.).*

One example was of an abstract concept – *quake the size of Loma Prieta (Ibid.).*

*Loma Prieta* references an earthquake which occurred in 1989 in California, but it is not completely clear from the context whether *the size* refers to the geographical area it was felt in, the strength of its quakes, or its destructive effects on the area.

The last two options seem more likely, as the previous sentence states: ‘a major quake is one that will accelerate a building at 40 per cent of gravity.’ (Ibid.)

Of 85 proper nouns, 75 of them are not preceded by an article, and ten of them (11.8%) were. Examples include:

*a ship the size of the Ocean Empress (Ibid.)*

*the smallest woodpecker of the region, the size of a Hedgesparrow (Ibid.)*

*something the size of a VW Golf (Spoken BNC2014)*

*streams the size of the Wensum, Bure or Waveney (BNC)*

*a wet patch the size of the Bay of Pigs (Ibid.).*

On the other hand, common nouns of place names and objects were more frequent following a determiner, though the split is not as marked: roughly 75% of examples were preceded by a determiner, while approximately 25% examples were not. The different ratio was influenced by multiple factors, such as the majority of proper nouns attested not needing an article as names of countries, cities or other place names which do not use an article (naturally, there are exceptions to this general rule, like *the United Kingdom* or *the Czech republic*, but these did not appear in this study). The proper nouns that do use the article are associated with it on an individual basis (*the Ocean Empress*, *the Bay of Pigs*, *the Wensum*) or because they signify a member of a certain class and the article is needed to mark an indefinite reference (*a VW Golf*, *a Hedgesparrow*).



### 4.3 Colour

*Colour* is the second-most frequent postmodifying head noun of the ones examined, with 32 instances recorded across BNC and Spoken BNC2014 (see Table 4). The query allowed for both spellings of the word, but as the data was extracted from a British corpus, it is not surprising that all of the results of the search contained the variant typical for Britain – *colour*.

The first query searched for postmodifying NPs with no determiner before the last noun, and no comma between the main head noun and the postmodifying phrase.

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="color|colour"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"]  
within <s/>
```

This search yielded 23 lines of results. Out of those, 20 were relevant.

Following the same procedure as with *colour*, the next query added a comma separating the postmodifying phrase and the head noun:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="color|colour"] [word="of"] [t  
ag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This search produced 10 lines of results and 3 of them were found to be relevant:

*her thick stockings, the colour of cocoa* (Ibid.)

*a cloud of short hair curving in clinging waves about her head, the colour of  
barley silk* (Ibid.)

*heavy, thick stuff falling to her elbows, the colour of barley sugar* (Ibid.).

The following query explored the variety which uses an article between *of* and the last noun in the postmodifying phrase:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="color|colour"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" |  
tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"]{1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

There were nine results, seven relevant instances remained after the manual filtering, including:

*his face the colour of the ground* (Ibid.)

*hair the colour of the sun's rays* (Ibid.)

*sky the colour of a Ceylon sapphire* (Ibid.)

The query for the variety with a comma separating the main head noun and the postmodifying phrase, and a determiner before the last noun was the following:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="color|colour"] [word="of"] [t  
ag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"]{1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This search yielded eight lines of results, two of which were relevant:

*a vivid scarlet blur, the colour of a London bus* (Ibid.)

*nondescript villages, the colour of the soil from which they arose* (Ibid.).

In Spoken BNC2014, the search for the variety without a determiner before the last noun used the following query:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="colour|color"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"]  
within <u/>
```

There were no results produced by this search. The second query in Spoken BNC2014 included a determiner before the last noun, and its form was as follows:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="colour|color"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" |  
tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"]{1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

This search also did not produce any results. Therefore, there were no instances in Spoken BNC2014 of the N-NP structure which used *colour* as the head of the postmodifying phrase.

When considering the semantics of the main head nouns being postmodified by this type of NP, it is no surprise that the overwhelming majority describe things which can be seen and can logically have a colour. The two exceptions are *ripeness* and *stuff*. While the former is a fairly abstract concept, the latter in context describes something which is definitely concrete and physical. Nine of the main head nouns (28%) are body parts, notably *hair* (four instances), *eyes* (two instances), *face* (two instances), and *skin* (one instance):

*hair the colour of the sun's rays* (Ibid.)

*eyes the colour of aquamarines* (Ibid.)

*his face the colour of summer* (Ibid.)

Another group of main head nouns (six instances – 18.8%) are of parts of nature, more specifically nouns related to water. This includes the word *water* itself (two instances) as well as river, stream, and sea:

*water the colour of the Thames* (Ibid.)

*river the colour of emeralds* (Ibid.)

*fast stream the colour of nickel* (Ibid.)

In regard to the last nouns of the NPs, nearly a third (ten instances – 31.3%) of the them are metals, gems and stones, such as:

*bands of light the colour of opals* (Ibid)

*sea the colour of metal* (Ibid.)

*a fast stream the colour of nickel* (Ibid.)

The biggest semantical group are objects or materials excluding the group of materials listed above, present in twelve instances (37.5%):

*his face the colour of the ground* (Ibid.)

*windcheater the colour of Day-Glo toothpaste* (Ibid.)

Six instances, or 18.8%, are food items:

*sheen the colour of pomegranates* (Ibid.)

*water the colour of Brown Windsor soup* (Ibid.)

*vegetable growths the colour of peaches* (Ibid.)

There are five instances of nouns which are either abstract or simply cannot be considered to have a colour. They are:

*long walls the colour of a storm* (Ibid.)

*pale tulle the colour of summer haze* (Ibid.)

*hair the colour of the sun's rays* (Ibid.)

#### 4.4 Length

Just like the previous nouns, the first search for *length* examined the postmodifying NP with no comma between the NP and the main head noun and no article between of and the final noun of the search. The query used was the following:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="length"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

There were 14 lines of results, but only one instance was relevant: *luxurious sofas the length of ocean liners* (BNC).

The next search examined an NP with a comma separating it from the main head, but without an article or a determiner following *of*:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="length"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The search produced 22 results, but none of them contained the N-NP sequence. The majority of them – 18 cases – were parts of lists, e.g. *Baryshnikov, in pink pyjamas, danced with a hoop, a length of ribbon, a hat and a chair [...]* (Ibid.)

The search for a postmodifying NP with an article or a determiner after *of* followed, using the query:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="length"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The query produced 44 lines of results. Of those, nine contained the N-NP structure and were further analysed. Examples were:

*thorns the length of her hand* (Ibid.)

*a strip the length of the roof* (Ibid.)

The last search in BNC included both a comma before the postmodifying NP and an article or a determiner after *of*. The query had the following form:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="length"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

There were 23 results produced, with only one being relevant to our study:

*a supple willow twig, the length of the space between Nara's hands* (Ibid.)

In Spoken BNC2014, the first query examined was this:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="length"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

There was one result, but it was found that it did not contain the N-NP structure:

*yeah but you could get er a length of cable couldn't you?* (Spoken BNC2014)

The noun length is the head noun, but the phrase stands on its own and does not postmodify anything. Interestingly, the article used is indefinite. As has been established, the postmodifying NPs do not seem to occur with indefinite articles.

The second search focused on an NP which included an article or a determiner, with the following query:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="length"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

After the search, there were four results. Only one result, however, was relevant:

*the walk the length of the church* (Ibid.)

In total, there were ten occurrences of postmodification with *length* as the head of the postmodifying NP. One example shows that postmodification by an NP can be coordinated with another kind of postmodification, in this case an adjective phrase: *Roll out the reserved black fondant trimmings and cut out a strip the length of the roof and about 2.5cm (1 inch) wide.* (BNC)

According to the principle known as the end-weight, it would be expected that the shorter of the postmodifiers would be placed first and the longer one would follow. However, that is clearly not the case in the example here. On the basis of the previous examples where the main head is separated from the postmodifying NP (*a lump of hard flesh the size of a golf ball*), we know that the postmodifying NP does not need to directly follow the head. On the other hand, the word order shown above suggests that it may be more natural or desirable to place the postmodification by an NP immediately after the main head noun when in coordination with another postmodifier, in spite of the end-weight principle.

## 4.5 Width

The first search focused on postmodifying NPs which were not separated from its head noun by a comma and did not place an article or a determiner between of and last noun of the NP. The query was the following:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word="AT0"] [word="width"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The search yielded no results.

The next query added a comma between the head noun and the postmodifying NP:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [word="AT0"] [word="width"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

Just like the previous query, this search brought no results.

The next query searched for NPs with an article or a determiner present before the last noun of the NP:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="width"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

It produced ten results, six of them were relevant. Examples include:

*a tube the width of a child's throat (Ibid.)*

*a trench the width of a spade (Ibid.)*

The search which followed looked for NPs where there was an article or a determiner present as well before the last noun of the phrase, but there was also a comma separating the postmodifier from the main head noun. The form of the query was this:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="width"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"]
```

The search yielded seven results. Only one of them was found to contain postmodification by an NP:

*the main trails, the width of a pavement (Ibid.)*

In Spoken BNC2014, the two following queries were used:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="width"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="width"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither of them produced any results.

One example shows postmodification of the main head noun by a prepositional preceding the postmodifying NP:

*a gap in the highway the width of the riverbed (Ibid.)*

In regard to the distribution of articles, there are five examples with indefinite articles before the main head nouns (*a strip the width of the room*) and two with definite articles in this position (*the moon the width of a V*). The nouns preceded by indefinite articles all have an indefinite reference. The two examples preceded by definite articles have a definite reference – in the case of *the moon the width of a V* it is logical reference, for *the main trails, the width of a pavement*, it is most likely anaphoric reference.

As has been the case with all previous examples, all articles preceding the head nouns of the postmodifying NPs are definite. As for the articles placed between *of* and the last noun of the NP, there are three definite articles (*a small split cane the width of the seed tray*) and four indefinite articles (*a tube the width of a child's throat*).

#### 4.6 Shape

The first query used for the head noun *shape* was as follows:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="shape"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The search returned one result, but it did not contain postmodification by an NP: *estimate taking into account the shape of inclusions* (BNC). The noun *account* is not the same sentence constituent as the shape of inclusions. As has been established in Section 2.4, the main head noun and the NP need to be members of the same sentence constituent.

The second query once again searched for an NP without an article or a determiner following the preposition *of*, but added a separating comma:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="shape"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The query produced 5 results, none of which was relevant.

The following query searched for NPs containing an article or a determiner:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="shape"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

Out of eight raw results, two instances were relevant. They were:

*a gold pin the shape of a crucifix* (Ibid.)

*a brown mark on the leg the shape of an iron* (Ibid.)

Note the postmodification of the main head noun in the second example.

The fourth query for shape searched for NPs which contained both a separating comma and an article or a determiner:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="shape"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This produced 15 results, but none of them were relevant.

For Spoken BNC2014, the queries entered used the following form, in line with the form established by the previous searches in this corpus:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="shape"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="shape"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither query returned any results.

In total, there are two results for the noun *shape*.

#### 4.7 Height

The first query was as follows:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="height"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This query produced one result, but it was found it did not contain the N-NP structure.

For the variant with a comma separating the main head noun and the postmodifying head noun, the query was as follows:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="height"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The search came back with no results.

The next query's form was as follows:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="height"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

It produced seven raw results and three were relevant:

*a blank wall the height of a house* (BNC)

*its top at the time the height of his own shoulder.* (Ibid.)

*plants the height of the trees* (Ibid.)

A comma was added to the previous query to form the next one:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="height"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

It yielded 11 results, but only one was relevant:

*An infra-red light, the height of the bridge* (Ibid.)

The following queries were used in Spoken BNC2014:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="height"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="height"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither of the queries showed any results.

In total, there are four instances of the N-NP structure where the head of the postmodifier is *height*.

#### 4.8 Breadth

The search started with the following query:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="breadth"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The query produced two results, but neither one was relevant for our study.

The next search added a comma between the main head noun and the postmodifying NP:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="breadth"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This search yielded only one result, which did not contain postmodification by an NP.

The next two queries focused on NPs which included an article or a postmodifier:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="breadth"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This search produced only one result, but it contained a postmodification by an NP:

*an invisible hinge the breadth of the garden* (BNC)

It is the only search with a 100% success rate in this study.

The next query added a comma to the previous search:

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="breadth"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

Five results were produced, however none of them were relevant.

In Spoken BNC2014, the two following queries were used:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="breadth"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="breadth"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither query returned any results. In total, only one result using breadth was found.



## 4.9 Depth

The first query searched for NPS which were not separated with a comma from their main head nouns and which did not use an article or a determiner between of and the last noun. The form of the query was the following:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="depth"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

4 results emerged from the search, but none of them contained postmodification by an NP. A separating comma was added into the second query between the main head noun and the NP:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="depth"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This search produced eight results, but once again none of them were relevant.

The next two queries were focused on NPs with articles or postmodifiers following of. The first was without a separating comma:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="depth"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

This search yielded nine results. One result contained postmodification by an NP:

*little indentations the depth of a Fist's thumbprint* (BNC)

The next query included a separating comma:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="depth"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

It returned 4 results, but none of them were relevant to our research.

In Spoken BNC2014, the following two queries were used:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="depth"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="depth"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither of them produced any results. In total, there was only one instance of a postmodification by an NP which used *depth* as the head.

## 4.10 Noun the age of NP, noun the weight of NP

These two nouns are summarised together, as there were no instances found of postmodification by an NP with *age* or *weight* as the postmodification heads in either corpus. The search queries for the nouns *age* and *weight* were put together in the same way as the queries for all other nouns in this study. The queries for age were as follows:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="age"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="age"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"]  
within <s/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="age"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" |  
tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="age"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0"  
| tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

The queries for *weight* were the following:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="weight"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within  
<s/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="weight"] [word="of"] [tag="N.  
*"] within <s/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="AT0"] [word="weight"] [word="of"] [tag="AT0" |  
tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [word=", "] [tag="AT0"] [word="weight"] [word="of"] [tag="AT  
0" | tag="DPS" | tag="DT0"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <s/>
```

For the number of raw results that these searches returned, refer to Table 4.

The same procedure was carried out in Spoken BNC2014. The queries for *age* were:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="age"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within  
<u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="age"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" | tag="PPZ"  
| tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither query returned any results.

Analogically, the queries for *weight* were:

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="weight"] [word="of"] [tag="N.*"] within  
<u/>
```

```
[tag="N.*"] [tag="DT"] [word="weight"] [word="of"] [tag="DT" |  
tag="PPZ" | tag="PDT"] {1,} [tag="N.*"] within <u/>
```

Neither of these two queries brought any results. Therefore, there were no incidences of the N-NP structure with the postmodifying head nouns *age* and *weight* in Spoken BNC2014.

## 5 Conclusion

This thesis was concerned with the use of noun phrases as postmodifiers of nouns. It presented a corpus-based study with a focus on gathering as many examples from the corpora as possible, as this particular type of postmodification is not in frequent use. Its aim was to formally outline the characteristics of this postmodification and to show how it is actually used.

The theoretical background of the thesis focused on the noun phrase and its formal properties. The general properties of the noun phrase were introduced, as well as specifics of its constituent most important to this thesis, which was postmodification. A survey of several major grammar reference books followed, where the research aimed to gather as much information from them about postmodification by noun phrase. However, since most descriptions of this structure were rather inconclusive and short, the next section listed every example gathered in grammar books or other secondary sources, such as OED. The list of examples, along with the basic outline from the previous section, then served as a basis for further description in detail, focusing on formal characteristics. A comparison was made with apposition, as they share some properties in realization.

The analysis consisted of presenting examples of postmodification by a noun phrase retrieved from British National Corpus and Spoken British National Corpus 2014, specifically of examples of the subtype which contains an embedded prepositional phrase. The examples were searched using multiple queries and manually filtered. In total, 310 examples were collected.

The vast majority of examples (81%) was of the head noun *size*, which was also the most frequently attested head in secondary sources. The second-most numerous head noun was *colour*, which made for 10.3% of instances. The remaining 8.7% was split between six other head nouns. Two other head nouns – *age* and *weight* had no instances or results whatsoever.

It was found that only three head nouns – *size*, *colour*, *length* – had more than ten occurrences across both corpora. Along with very low ipm (2.153 ipm for *size* in BNC and radically lower for all other head nouns) confirms the infrequent usage in both written text and speech.

A great majority of instances retrieved from written text (86%) did not contain a comma which separated the main head noun and the postmodifying

phrase. Upon comparing the three most numerous head nouns to avoid outliers, all three lie within 4% of the total number. It can therefore be assumed that if there were enough instances of the other head nouns, the ratio of comma usage would turn out to be in the similar range.

When considering the combinations of a comma separating the main head noun from the postmodifying phrase and the presence of an article or a determiner between *of* and the last noun of the NP, the combination in which every head noun attested had at least one instance was that an article or determiner was present, but a comma was not. However, the combination which had the most instances in total (by a single instance) was where neither the comma nor the article/determiner were present. This combination was only attested in the three most popular head noun. A combination of an absent article or determiner and the presence of a separating comma was only attested in *size* and *colour*.

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## 7 Résumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývala užíváním jmenných frází jako postmodifikátoru podstatných jmen. Prezentovala studii založenou na korpusu se zaměřením na shromáždění co nejvíce příkladů z korpusů, poněvadž tento typ postmodifikace se nepoužívá velmi často. Jejím cílem bylo popsat formální vlastnosti tohoto typu postmodifikace a ukázat, jak se reálně používá v jazyce.

Teoretická část práce se zaměřila na jmennou frázi a její formální charakteristiku. Byly představeny její obecné vlastnosti, stejně jako specifika její součásti, která byla pro tuto práci nejdůležitější, tj. postmodifikaci. Následoval přehled známých referenčních gramatik, kde bylo cílem zjistit co nejvíce o postmodifikaci jmennou frází. Protože většina popisů v gramatikách byla poměrně krátká a nespécifická, další sekce vyjmenovala všechny příklady sesbírané v gramatikách a jiných sekundárních zdrojích, jako např. OED. Tento seznam příkladů, spolu s popisy ze sekce předchozí, poté posloužil jako základ detailního popisu vlastností tohoto typu postmodifikace, se zřetelem na formální charakteristiku. Tato postmodifikace dále byla porovnána s apozicí, jelikož obě konstrukce sdílejí jisté rysy v realizaci a mohou vypadat velmi podobně.

Praktická část sestávala z prezentace příkladů postmodifikace jmennou frází, které byly získány z Britského národního korpusu a Mluveného Britského národního korpusu 2014, specificky příklady podtypu, který obsahuje včleněnou předložkovou frázi. Příklady byly vyhledávány pomocí mnoha dotazů a poté ručně vytříděny. Dohromady bylo nasbíráno 310 příkladů z obou korpusů.

Valná většina příkladů (81%) měla jako hlavní člen postmodifikující fráze slovo *size*, což byla také nejčastější doložená hlava fráze v sekundární literatuře. Druhé nejčastější bylo slovo *colour*, které zabíralo 10,3% případů. Zbývajících 8,7% bylo rozděleno mezi šest dalších hlav. Dvě hlavy – *age* a *weight* – neměly žádné výsledky ani příklady ani v jednom z korpusů

Pouze tři hlavy frází – *size*, *colour*, *length* – měly v rámci obou korpusů více než 10 příkladů. Spolu s nízkým počtem výskytů na million slov (2.153 ipm pro *size* v BNC řádově nižší pro všechny ostatní hlavy) potvrzuje, že se struktura používá pouze zřídka, a to jak v psaném jazyce, tak v řeči.

Velká většina, a to 86%, případů z psaného textu neobsahovala čárku oddělující hlavní člen fráze a postmodifikující frázi. Všechny tři nejčastější hlavní

členy se nachází v pásmu do 4% rozdílu. Dá se tedy předpokládat, že kdyby bylo více příkladů pro ostatní hlavní členy, poměr příkladů s čárkami by vypadal podobně.

V kombinacích oddělovací čárky a přítomnosti členu nebo determinátoru mezi předložkou *of* a posledním členem postmodifikující fráze bylo zjištěno, že kombinace, ve které má každá hlava alespoň jeden příklad, je ta, kde je přítomen člen/determinator, ale není čárka. Naopak, kombinace, ve které bylo nalezeno nejvíce případů (s rozdílem jediného případu) byla ta, kde nebyla přítomna ani oddělovací čárka, ani člen nebo determinator. V této kategorii měly příklady pouze nejčastější tři hlavní členy. Kombinace bez členu/determinátoru s dělicí čárkou byla dokonce doložena jen u *size and colour*.



## 8 Appendix

The appendix contains all results which contain the N-NP structure found in BNC and Spoken BNC2014 while researching this thesis. Results are grouped by the head nouns of their postmodifying phrases. The N-NP structure is indicated in bold.

### Size

Result number	Result	Source
1	<b>Black boxes the size of video-cassettes</b> were welded on to 3,000 cars and hundreds of loops were buried in the roads.	BNC
2	There were <b>pumpkins the size of bean bags</b> and groups of onions which would have made fair roofs for Byzantine churches.	BNC
3	The Japanese are developing <b>paggers the size of credit cards</b> which could arrive in this country as early as next year.	BNC
4	In the cathedral she observed the new archbishop moving among the strange costumes , the rosary with purple tassles and <b>red beads the size of pigeons' eggs</b> , and the purple velvet fez.	BNC
5	The Odeon, St Albans, the 1970s. The film Shivers, a real horror of <b>bloody worm-like parasites the size of Errol Flynn's penis</b> . In front of me five youths, age seventeen, leaning back, arms spread, cool, sniggering and making jokes, pretending not to be frightened.	BNC
6	Imagine <b>a rainforest the size of England, Scotland and Wales</b> .	BNC
7	[...] and so mesmerized by the success of Hollywood, that they didn't have the strength to argue that keeping the industry fragmented and flexible, learning from Hollywood's example without simply imitating its outward forms, might be a better way of catering for <b>a market the size of Britain</b> than heading up the road of monopoly.	BNC
8	Anyone trying to climb the fence could have been impaled on <b>spikes the size of joiner's nails</b> .	BNC
9	<b>Icicles the size of stalactites</b> hung from the eaves of wayside stations.	BNC
10	<b>A crumbling network the size of Belgium</b> ; 2.7 million passengers a day; the average Londoner's travelling time to work 52 minutes and rising by several seconds each week.	BNC
11	You seem to think that 1960s' antitrust law enforcement was wonderful because the government	BNC

	‘took on <b>giants the size of AT&amp;T and IBM</b> and broke up a merger of Procter & Gamble and Clorox.’	
12	They are nonetheless a big comedown from the 1960s, when federal trustbusters took on <b>giants the size of AT&amp;T and IBM</b> and broke up a merger of Procter & Gamble and Clorox.	BNC
13	For a world that desperately needs to find new ways of feeding itself, there’ll be disease-resistant crops, super-woolly sheep and <b>wingless chickens the size of Mini Metros.</b>	BNC
14	As technology improves, there’ll be disease-resistant crops , super-woolly sheep and <b>wingless chickens the size of Mini Metros.</b>	BNC
15	All the furniture was on a mammoth scale; luxurious sofas the length of ocean liners, and <b>billiard tables the size of cricket pitches.</b>	BNC
16	A decade after the Argentinians invaded, the Falkland Islands face a massive new advance -- from <b>an iceberg the size of Buckinghamshire.</b>	BNC
17	The London hotel corridor is full of minders, all sporting various degrees of cowboy drag, and a manager with <b>a belly the size of Memphis.</b>	BNC
18	I would like him to explain to the Americans, whose US banner had ‘ <b>his</b> ’ <b>rings the size of footballs</b> , or to the Swedes, who had the Olympic logo emblazoned across their tracksuits, and to the many other teams why Great Britain are not entitled to wear it.	BNC
19	For <b>a country the size of England</b> , such a tiny league would be a waste of resources and Cooke, presumably, would not want to attend second division games, even to view players such as Nottingham’s Martin Pepper, a flanker of England quality.	BNC
20	Stockpiles of bricks sufficient to build <b>a city the size of Norwich</b> are lying idle on the forecourts of Britain’s brick manufacturers.	BNC
21	So great and rapid is the devastation that some have feared that the entire reef might disappear -- even though it contains 3000 separate coral islands, stretched 2000 km along the Queensland coast, and covering <b>an area the size of Great Britain.</b>	BNC
22	While California’s engineers do not specify precisely what a minor or moderate quake is, a major quake is one that will accelerate a building at 40 per cent of gravity. Another <b>quake the size of Loma Prieta</b> would quality. [sic]	BNC
23	And yet another 10 per cent of stars are white dwarfs, <b>dim stars the size of Earth</b> and all invisible to the naked eye.	BNC

24	But if I was studying the daisy family here, I'd be looking at plants from the size of daisies as we know them, to <b>plants the size of trees</b> .	BNC
25	More often than not they are located ten miles outside town under a tin roof, in wasteland surrounded by a <b>car park the size of Brazil</b> .	BNC
26	The ash raining down from it added to the misery of the people in the area -- the Sir Robert Sale reported <b>lumps the size of pumpkins</b> falling on her decks, and she was at least forty kilometres distant.	BNC
27	On one side it was surrounded by a strong wall, on the other it was washed by a <b>fish pond the size of lake</b> , well stocked with all kinds of fish and game birds, to feast both the eye and the palate.	BNC
28	One day you can be swamped by sand and the next climbing a <b>hill the size of Ben Nevis</b> .	BNC
29	There were no walls, just <b>rough stones the size of dinner-plates</b> marking each grave.	BNC
30	The possibility that the unfortunate young gentleman was waylaid seems inescapable; he was, however, in possession of little, if any, money to attract the attention of would-be malefactors, and that he could have been attacked in broad daylight, in the middle of a <b>city the size of Vienna</b> , appears to us virtually incredible.	BNC
31	Luckily, in a <b>place the size of Scampton</b> it was easy enough to keep out of her path, and this I did quite successfully until my turn came for demobilisation.	BNC
32	A minimum of three VAN stations are required to fix the location by triangulation, but the modest range of the technique means that a network of many stations would be needed to cover even a <b>country the size of Greece</b> .	BNC
33	Daunting as that may sound, it's nothing to what a <b>maker the size of Rover</b> must go through to get an average family car into fully type-approved production.	BNC
34	It would result in building sites that would cover an <b>area the size of Pfunts</b> (the largest town).	BNC
35	I phoned because there's a <b>cavern the size of Wookey Hole</b> inside me.	BNC
36	<b>An area the size of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire</b> has been put in a concrete overcoat.	BNC
37	Matthew (3.10) and Claire (3.6) are trying to make a <b>tower the size of Claire</b> .	BNC
38	Taking <b>fish the size of Neon Tetras</b> as a benchmark, and allowing for their growth: A 24" × 12" × 12" would support about 24 Neons	BNC
39	One visionary speaker at the British Association (science) meeting in 1984 spoke of the likelihood of	BNC

	<b>rats the size of wolves</b> inheriting the Earth in 50 million years time, when Man -- in all probability -- is no longer on the scene.	
40	There could be sabre-toothed prairie dogs, <b>mice the size of foxes</b> , and new species such as the 'gigantelope', and there would be killer baboons.	BNC
41	The party is being held in <b>a ballroom the size of Carnegie Hall</b> and they've forgotten to provide a podium so the people at the back have no idea you're there.	BNC
42	Yet, for all its self-importance late-medieval Chichester was only <b>a quarter the size of Salisbury</b> in terms of its taxpayers, 869 of them in 1377.	BNC
43	Monetary values depend on the size of the organisation but for <b>a company the size of Lucas Automotive</b> the potential savings from each review have generally run into hundreds of thousands of pounds.	BNC
44	The amount of leather (strides, biker boots, waistcoats ) on your average dancefloor would constitute <b>a cow the size of North Wales</b> .	BNC
45	In <b>a country the size of Zambia</b> , with few telephones in rural areas and few reporters based anywhere outside the few major towns, it is impossible to check such a story speedily.	BNC
46	The loud HAR-ROOMF! HAR-ROOMF! grew louder and, all at once, there he was: the great boxy head with two huge floppy ears on either side; broad muzzle with a grand black nose; <b>feet the size of dinner platters</b> ; a tail as thick as a mooring rope; vast pink tongue hanging out between a pair of the longest, sharpest teeth imaginable.	BNC
47	The creature turned its head to look at her with slit-pupilled <b>eyes the size of saucers</b> .	BNC
48	It is <b>a once wealthy town the size of Bolton</b> in Lancashire.	BNC
49	The label said it was made from the powdered teeth of deadly snakes, and it was guaranteed to raise <b>welts the size of walnuts</b> on your skin.	BNC
50	British Bulldog Davey Boy Smith has <b>legs the size of tree trunks</b> -- and they are used to weathering storms.	BNC
51	Downstairs, in the crypt, Toni Halliday is carefully painting a red dot on her forehead while Curve guitarist Alex regales us with unlikely tales of <b>cockroaches the size of dachshunds</b> in his flat at home after spotting a standard one moving about their dressing room 'john' and a dead one upturned next to the lockers.	BNC
52	I happened to be in the area and Lucasta Redburn's not a common name, especially in <b>a town the size of Plumford</b> .	BNC

53	He knew, because in <b>a town the size of Plumford</b> everybody knew these things , that Hubert Molland had been given a combined parish a few miles outside Plumford, and that the Mollands were now living in Champney Crucis; he knew that Kate had left school and was now doing something at the technical college; [...]	BNC
54	Angels grow big enough to eat <b>fish the size of Neon Tetras.</b>	BNC
55	Manescu adjusted his snow goggles as <b>white flakes the size of cats' tails</b> began to drift down.	BNC
56	But they, and many other organisations throughout society, also have the benefit of strongly supportive national policies and of state guaranteed funds on a scale that is not entirely incommensurate with the task of changing health determining habits: for <b>a population the size of England's</b> , the total yearly Victorian Health Promotion Foundation's budget is equivalent to around £140 million, and much of it goes to the voluntary sector.	BNC
57	<b>Cities the size of Glasgow, Bristol and Hull</b> are no longer responsible for education or social services.	BNC
58	That's going to do a lot of damage in <b>a soup bowl the size of Wembley stadium</b> , I don't think.	BNC
59	Then, after the old guy has examined, weighed and wrapped it in a turquoise napkin, we get our gold, in <b>little ingots the size of collar studs.</b>	BNC
60	Of <b>bacteria the size of hamsters</b> , living peaceably in imaginatively landscaped enclosures at the zoo.	BNC
61	He gave me a couple of <b>pills the size of tennis balls</b> and told me to get my head down.	BNC
62	Dave Pushell adjusted his bright red spectacles which had <b>lenses the size of teacups.</b>	BNC
63	His job was to go out into the bush to take samples and he found it the most unspoilt area on Earth he has ever been to, <b>areas the size of Wales</b> in which no white man has ever set foot.	BNC
64	But the basic trouble in the Gulf is that the United States is exclusively geared to fight a major world-scale war, and its forces can not fight any other, not even against <b>enemies the size of Grenada and Panama.</b>	BNC
65	The repossession problem was apparent a long time before the politicians decided it was an issue -- the figure of 80,000, which is equivalent to <b>a town the size of Coventry</b> , referred to homes that HAD already been repossessed.	BNC
66	He asked me to try and get him a map but this was a difficult thing to do in <b>a place the size of</b>	BNC

	<b>Fontanellato</b> , where hardly anyone possessed even an atlas of the world.	
67	Tundra and high northern moorland, feeding mainly on lemmings and <b>birds the size of Ptarmigan and Oystercatcher.</b>	BNC
68	Nettles with <b>leaves the size of dinner plates</b> fought a battle for possession of the clearing with garrotte vines, which sought to strangle the nettles with tendrils that sprouted vivid scarlet trumpet flowers.	BNC
69	This means, for example, that <b>a feature the size of Sri Lanka</b> would be a featureless blur.	BNC
70	Roll the stiffened truffle mixture into <b>small balls the size of walnuts</b> , leaving them a little rough and craggy.	BNC
71	And erm yo you have <b>these rooms the size of wardrobes</b> you know?	BNC (spoken section)
72	Even for <b>objects the size of stars</b> , the attractive force of gravity can win over all the other forces and cause the star to collapse.	BNC
73	How on earth did <b>a man the size of Nathan Bryce</b> manage in here?	BNC
74	Four of them are bubbling around the kitchen and the other two are in the front room keeping an eye on the visitors, roped up on the floor watching <b>two blacks the size of quarter-backs</b> shaking through their jackets.	BNC
75	<b>Muscles the size of melons</b> bulged in forearms like floursacks.	BNC
76	It was a white charger with <b>hooves the size of meat dishes</b> and leather harness aglitter with ostentatious gold ornamentation.	BNC
77	The army occupies <b>an area of land the size of Torness turbine hall</b> with each soldier standing stiffly to attention a few inches from his neighbours.	BNC
78	The lottery business is basically a very very small business with limited competition, and for <b>a state the size of California</b> it makes it very difficult to have large competition because only a certain number of companies can actually put in a system of this size.	BNC
79	He cuts <b>small fillets</b> of lean meat <b>the size of quails' breasts.</b>	BNC
80	It is buying the external high and low voltage electricity distribution systems of the three airports which, together, supply a maximum demand similar to that of <b>a city the size of Cambridge.</b>	BNC
81	True, with <b>a firm the size of Stevenson's</b> , working on up to fifty contracts for a dozen or so companies, there could never be so dead a reckoning that the final moment could be named with certainty.	BNC
82	Buffaloes more than twice the size of today's must have been formidable beasts, and <b>pigs the size of</b>	BNC

	<b>rhinoceroses</b> , with metre-long tusks, had little to fear, even from such predators as the now-extinct sabre-toothed members of the lion family which roamed the area.	
83	The amount of paper destroyed in the UK each year when quantified in numbers of trees equals <b>a forest the size of Wales</b> .	BNC
84	He had felt them -- round swelling <b>lumps the size of gold coins</b> .	BNC
85	Then from behind the bar <b>a hunk the size of Ludo</b> and with a nose like a squashed pear tells them to cool it: we aren't police, he says.	BNC
86	This would be sufficient to provide 10 per cent of the country's electricity needs -- enough to power <b>a city the size of Amsterdam</b> .	BNC
87	Together, they will generate approximately 1,000 megawatts of power -- providing about 10 per cent of the country's electricity needs, enough in itself to supply <b>a city the size of Amsterdam</b> .	BNC
88	The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has suggested that <b>an area the size of Europe</b> would have to be planted every year to balance emissions of carbon dioxide.	BNC
89	A single state company in Usk-Ilimsk region, for example, is felling <b>a forest the size of Switzerland</b> .	BNC
90	[...] so agriculture produces a homogenous product, by and large and er as there isn't the scope, the product differentiation, and there isn't the scope for specialisation because we'd need <b>a farm the size of Europe</b> to feed the world with, with wheat.	BNC (spoken section)
91	One moment the sun was on her face, the next <b>raindrops the size of golf balls</b> were pelting down on her, drenching her as thoroughly as a bathroom shower.	BNC
92	But that's ridiculous -- Chester's hasn't got enough money to buy out <b>a competitor the size of Farthingdales...</b>	BNC
93	And who has <b>a grudge the size of Mount Everest</b> against you?	BNC
94	When it vanished, it was equivalent to switching off <b>100,000 power stations the size of Didcot power station</b> .	BNC
95	Climbing pressure ridges formed by <b>ancient blocks of ice the size of Yorkshire</b> grinding together, he decided to ditch his skis.	BNC
96	If anyone was going to make the step from player to puppet master at <b>a club the size of Tottenham</b> , then it was Venables.	BNC
97	Sports council guidelines say <b>a population the size of Richmondshire</b> should have two sports halls, ten squash courts and one swimming pool.	BNC

98	Four years ago, those markets were just a rumour -- places where <b>scraps</b> of lambs <b>the size of rabbits</b> were bought for unbelievable prices and then spitted like kebabs.	BNC
99	We are used to this -- when you are <b>a club the size of Newcastle</b> and runaway leaders in the first division, every game is a pressure game.	BNC
100	That vision could not be put into practice if Highland were to be governed by <b>an authority the size of Belgium</b> .	BNC
101	They yeah we used to call in Tex and he, he couldn't believe that there were old people living in Walsall at the time in <b>this country the size of England</b> , and people living in Walsall that had never seen the sea in their lives, and this guy coming from America couldn't believe this.	BNC (spoken section)
102	It is obviously disastrous for <b>a club the size of Everton</b> to be in the position they are in, but this could be the springboard.	BNC
103	Twelve and a half million acres of tropical rainforest are destroyed every year. <b>An area the size of England, Scotland and Wales</b> .	BNC
104	Well I think it, we should er congratulate ourselves in having the European Community as a piece of machinery inside which it's possible to contain <b>a power the size of Germany</b> .	BNC (spoken section)
105	[...] whose primary aim was to secure the future of the rainforest in an area stretching from the Heath Sanctuary on the Bolivian border up to and including Manu and the Tambopata Reserves: <b>an area</b> of one and a half million hectares, <b>the size of Switzerland</b> .	BNC
106	Alexander walking to and from the water-tank in Crowe's kitchen-garden, where <b>balloon-like tadpoles, the size of half-crowns</b> , dived and plashed their lips, unable to emerge and metamorphose into frogs, was amused sometimes by the counterpoint that wailed in his mind: Cabestan's heart, Vincent 's ear, gassed soldier' throats, Brooke's poppies, [...]	BNC
107	The Gilf Kebir consists of a monotonously smooth <b>plateau, the size of Wales</b> , formed of Nubian sandstone and standing as much as 330 m (1 100 ft) above the surrounding flat desert plains.	BNC
108	Bryan Gould, Labour's trade and industry spokesman, yesterday posed for photographers with a Co-op <b>credit card the size of a tea tray</b> : 'There are middle class Labour supporters... no, it won't contribute to the credit boom... change your credit card and help Labour win.'	BNC
109	Hamnett's relationship with Bertelsen foundered early last year, but only after he had opened <b>an extravagant</b>	BNC



	<b>shop the size of an aircraft hangar</b> for her, designed by Norman Foster in trendy Brompton Cross, South Kensington.	
110	By the time I reached Tintern I could go in straight lines easily and had <b>a right wrist the size of a tennis ball</b> that was painful to touch and crackled ominously when I flexed it.	BNC
111	They range from the Brookings Institution, with its vast battleship of a building on Massachusetts Avenue, to tiny lobbying outfits with <b>offices the size of a doctor's waiting room.</b>	BNC
112	They have telescope mirrors comparable in size to the one on the Hubble space telescope -- but, one hopes, not afflicted by the Hubble mirror's distortions -- and produce images good enough to make out <b>an object the size of a paperback book.</b>	BNC
113	Perhaps he'll be sitting at home in Brighton next month not remembering a thing about it, perhaps in a year or two Sony or Akai will be marketing <b>a small black box the size of a cigarette packet</b> that cuts and scratches at the touch of a button.	BNC
114	It would take <b>a predator the size of an eagle</b> to do that, and this was not exactly the highlands of Scotland.	BNC
115	On 3 October, a certain Brigadier McLean wrote to the Director of Military Operations suggesting that the 'S.A.S., L.R.D.G. and 1 L.R.S. be combined and that armour, artillery and <b>infantry the size of a regiment</b> should be added for seaborne operations.	BNC
116	From a steep ascent you emerge on to <b>a surprisingly large plateau the size of a football field</b> , covered with cairns, memorial plaques, the ruined observatory, and of course the people you left behind on the tourist path.	BNC
117	[...] they choose a cliff and try to reach the summit by slowly inching their way up vertical rock , pushing their fingers into tiny fissures and standing with one toe on <b>a ledge the size of a pebble.</b>	BNC
118	We'll bring you back a spider -- we found <b>one</b> in our bed <b>the size of an LP!</b>	BNC
119	Without waiting for an answer he said, 'I'll tell you what he's got. Brashness. Either that or <b>a dong the size of a surfboard.</b> '	BNC
120	An <b>object the size of the Sun</b> would take 29 minutes to collapse to a singularity under its own gravity -- at least that would be the time measured by an observer stationed on its surface before he too vanished into zero dimensions.	BNC
121	<b>A box the size of a calculator</b> , mounted on the staff, measures the angle and distance from source.	BNC
122	The equipment for funnelling off the carbon-12 takes up two sides of <b>a workshop the size of a church hall.</b>	BNC

123	<b>White, yellowish and orange lights the size of a baseball</b> have been reported moving around, sometimes performing aerobatics.	BNC
124	Changez's left arm was withered in some way, and stuck on the end of the attenuated limb was <b>a lump</b> of hard flesh <b>the size of a golf ball</b> , a small fist, with only a tiny thumb projecting from the solid mass where there should have been nimble, shop-painting, box-carrying fingers.	BNC
125	At the beginning of our second week in Corfu, I woke up to find <b>a lump</b> beneath my left arm <b>the size of a pigeon's egg</b> and two smaller ones running into my breast.	BNC
126	Thus was Cu Sith, and he differed from other dogs in having paws that left <b>prints the size of a man's</b> , and a long tail plaited in a flat braid which lay coiled upon his back.	BNC
127	They would need <b>accelerators the size of our galaxy</b> , several hundred thousand light years across.	BNC
128	Sony markets the Data Discman, <b>a hand-held electronic book the size of a paperback</b> and the weight of a bag of sugar.	BNC
129	PC World is also about to introduce low-cost training at its Croydon superstore surely a great boon to anyone who has spent days getting to grips with <b>a user manual the size of a telephone directory!</b>	BNC
130	If you think I'm standing waiting for <b>a charging animal the size of a tank</b> to reach me... how on earth do you grab its nose before it tramples you into the turf?	BNC
131	Broken glass, bloodstained tablecloths and unopened champagne bottles littered the dining room and one explosion left <b>a hole the size of a football</b> .	BNC
132	The loft covered <b>an area the size of the house</b> , with unused and shadowy places under the eaves which were unlikely to be investigated -- particularly by Nigel, who, sadly, even if he came out of hospital would nevermore be able to climb the ladder.	BNC
133	<b>A piece the size of a match head</b> is a good guide as to the amount required for a [...]	BNC
134	The kitchen was what she had expected, dominated by an antique cooker and <b>a fridge the size of a Buick</b> .	BNC
135	Whether it's a skinny sliver of a thing or <b>a rock the size of a cherry</b> , that sensational stone is what all women want on their finger.	BNC
136	Leslie, who was suffering from a heart condition before the crash, had <b>a clot the size of an apple</b> removed on Monday.	BNC

137	She pointed <b>a finger the size of a salami</b> at the child's head and shouted, 'You look like a rat with a tail coming out of its head!'	BNC
138	She had now stationed herself directly behind Rupert, and suddenly she extended <b>a hand the size of a tennis racquet</b> and grabbed all the hair on Rupert's head in her fist.	BNC
139	'You!' the Trunchbull shouted, pointing <b>a finger the size of a rolling-pin</b> at a boy called Wilfred.	BNC
140	For months afterwards, I had <b>a purple weal the size of a half-crown</b> .	BNC
141	A spare <b>chainsword-fist the size of a Land Raider</b> dangled from the chains of a jib crane... Beyond deck and gantries and derricks yawned the darkened abyss of the arena -- where the Blood Drinker Marines had met their fate.	BNC
142	It strikes me, as I'm hanging around <b>a dressing room the size of a barn</b> , that Carter have wound up more people again this year than any other British band in the Top 40 -- with the possible exception of The Levellers.	BNC
143	Bissett had once met the gaunt technician from A45 who had apparently received through a faulty glove <b>a particle of plutonium the size of a pinhead</b> and whose body had been cremated six months later before there could be an inquest.	BNC
144	The craft passes down a wide channel between sheer cliffs lined with castles, ramparts and defences, before passing through the second portal, a gate of shining silver set with <b>sapphires the size of a man's head</b> .	BNC
145	It's like those pesky jelly strings in eggs that stick between your teeth -- really monstrous ones from <b>an egg the size of a mountain!</b>	BNC
146	Were one to create <b>a mouse the size of a moose</b> , that mouse would probably have a folded neocortex if its cortex had increased in proportion to the increase in its body size.	BNC
147	His office door -- <b>an office the size of a cupboard</b> -- had 'Mr S. Mulgrove' on it.	BNC
148	Emphasising the futility of filling up <b>a large sheet</b> of cartridge paper <b>the size of a drawing board</b> with the object you are drawing, irrespective of its proximity, Sickert insisted on the importance of never sketching the figure and the background separately [...]	BNC
149	The scene outside a Moscow hotel: a man in a suit unfurls an umbrella, turns it upside down and attaches it to <b>a box the size of a fruit crate</b> .	BNC
150	The stones were more colourful, varying in size and shape from tiny, flat pebbles to <b>perfect spheres the size of an eyeball</b> .	BNC

151	She noticed one of the wooden struts on the opposite wall had snapped off leaving <b>an aperture the size of a football</b> in the corner of the car.	BNC
152	This man has <b>a brain the size of a pea</b> , he's a maniac.	BNC
153	The African elephant shrew, <b>a highly-strung insect-eating mammal the size of a mouse</b> with a nose drawn out into a mobile trunk, depends for its safety on knowing its trails better than any hunter that might chase it.	BNC
154	Then producing <b>a bread knife the size of a cutlass</b> he suggested, in short, that I vacate his premises and keep my proboscis out of his business or he'd reacquaint me with this morning's breakfast.	BNC
155	But wait! He has a hang-up -- not <b>a dick the size of a pin</b> , not even a fetish for sharing his bed with woolly four-legged animals. No, this guy's fault is he had one too many bourbons before getting up to strut his stuff on the dance-floor.	BNC
156	<b>A bird the size of a sparrow</b> beats its wings 14 times a second, while the larger gull beats its wings 3 times a second, so these are also at infrasonic frequencies.	BNC
157	He took her to the deserted camp laundry: a large hut with <b>a great copper the size of a steam-engine</b> , a line of deep sinks, and rows of drying lines.	BNC
158	But he had months of planning and <b>an intelligence network the size of a planet</b> behind him.	BNC
159	<b>A distorting witch-ball the size of a football</b> stood in a wooden fruit bowl on the sideboard, in the middle of a mute congregation of bottles of tomato ketchup, salad cream, H.P. Sauce, Daddies Favourite sauce and Okay fruit sauce, all with dried dribbles running down their sides.	BNC
160	There, in the middle of the white-tiled floor, was a beetle. <b>A rounded, black-shelled thing the size of a brooch.</b>	BNC
161	I'd <b>a lump</b> on my head <b>the size of a goose egg</b> ; I'd been through some kind of hell in the spaces; I'd prayed for ... it was not what I'd prayed for at all.	BNC
162	Ruined arches, black branches, <b>grass island the size of a football pitch</b> but round, a police car with blue and red stripe parked outside the bursar's flint-fronted office.	BNC
163	Under the long curling hair hanging lankly over the driver's neck, Howard has noticed, is <b>a tumour the size of a sparrow's egg.</b>	BNC
164	<b>A spider the size of her thumbnail</b> dropped past her in the gloom, its legs brushing her cheek.	BNC
165	That's what we're to have. That's the size we're to have, <b>faith the size of a mustard seed.</b>	BNC

166	But when Jesus says, <b>faith the size of a mustard seed</b> will do, then we have our doubts.	BNC
167	[...] she continued to look upon it all unmoved from her new perch, and someone came back glorying in his spoils -- was it her uncle, or her mother's father? -- with splinters for each of the family and <b>a chunk the size of a brick</b> for himself.	BNC
168	She raised a flipper-clawed foot, and <b>a shadow the size of a meltdown scar</b> fell over the busy-armed figure.	BNC
169	Elsie provided <b>a copper ashtray the size of a flower pot</b> .	BNC
170	See that there? That was that there was <b>a lump the size of a tennis ball</b> .	BNC (spoken section)
171	The gospels commend <b>faith the size of a grain</b> of mustard seed.	BNC
172	You could then pack several New Testaments into <b>a mineral crystal the size of a pin's head</b> .	BNC
173	At last I found it in the stern of the barge, <b>a hole the size of a man's fist</b> as if someone had taken a hammer and smashed through the bottom.	BNC
174	'Mighty magic,' commented the barbarian, pushing down heavily on the complaining blade with <b>a hand the size of a ham</b> .	BNC
175	You will, however, probably need to draw your own soft furnishings, since our colonial cousins seem to favour <b>settees the size of a stuntman's soft landing pad</b> .	BNC
176	You could, for instance, specify <b>a label the size of a ticket</b> , and print your own raffle tickets (you can print duplicate labels, you see), or serialise invitation cards etc.	BNC
177	Laverne trots back and forth like a dog that won't give up, outside <b>an entrance the size of a tea-cup</b> .	BNC
178	I rummage furiously for a freebie hotel mini-shampoo bottle with <b>a screw-on lid the size of a marble</b> .	BNC
179	I begin by repeating the point that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made in a letter to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North on 14 January, that in <b>an organisation the size of the health service</b> , which deals with so many patient contacts, it should not be surprising -- indeed, it should be welcomed -- that we do not seek to impose total uniformity on every single decision that is made about the treatment of patients across the country.	BNC
180	Rather, they are luminous streaks, officially called 'trains', produced when <b>tiny particles the size of a grain</b> of sand plunge into the earth's atmosphere and	BNC

	interact with atmospheric molecules at an altitude of, typically, 80 km.	
181	I do not fish the big rivers like the Thames or the Trent for bream but I love to get after them on <b>streams the size of the Wensum, Bure or Waveney.</b>	BNC
182	Sitting in the back seat was a woman in a long, cream dress and <b>a hat the size of a toddler's swimming-pool.</b>	BNC
183	Mr. Gould the author of the Birds of Europe is about leaving this country for New Holland, or as it is now called Australia -- he takes his Wife and Bairns with him, <b>a Waggon the size of a Squatters Cabin</b> and all such apparatus as will imcumber [sic] him not a little -- he has never travelled in the Woods, never salted his rump Stakes [sic] with Gun Powder and how he will take to it [...]	BNC
184	It was a branch from a tree. On the branch was <b>a flower the size of a bucket.</b>	BNC
185	'If the fall didn't break his neck,' said the pathologist in a cloud of smoke, 'then the massive blood loss and shock did. There's <b>a piece of glass the size of your fist</b> in his neck. Damn near took his head clean off.'	BNC
186	I hefted the bouncing bantling off my knee. There <b>was a wet patch the size of the Bay of Pigs</b> right across the lap of my trenchcoat.	BNC
187	Sure , my partner had taken off with the two-headed bankroll. Sure, I was standing here with <b>a hole the size of an elephant's nose guard</b> in my four-set clause.	BNC
188	No. 23 had <b>a front garden the size of a Kleenex</b> which was either badly looked after or was one of the new butterfly sanctuaries Greenpeace were trying to establish.	BNC
189	Where Niall was concerned, by means of careful avoidance, she hadn't seen him, other than at a distance, for the past two days. On <b>a ship the size of the Ocean Empress</b> it was surprisingly easy, especially when it seemed he was adopting the same principle.	BNC
190	But I think it would spoil everything for you, when you realise he's just a boring, pushy young fellow with <b>an ego the size of the bullring.</b>	BNC
191	It's claimed there's still <b>an area the size of a town</b> left to be built on.	BNC
192	<b>An electronic bug the size of a staple</b> is helping protect valuable antiques. The bug can be inserted into antique furniture or pieces of art.	BNC
193	I remember Jim Laker showing me his greatly distended index finger, the result of thousands of hours of actually spinning the ball on to <b>a landing area the size of a pocket handkerchief.</b>	BNC

194	Suddenly Charlie heard a loud squeal from behind him. He turned angrily to remonstrate with Tommy, only to see <b>a rat the size of a rabbit</b> lying between his legs.	BNC
195	Right come the morning arrived and and somebody else I can't remember who though , and there we were all ready to go and were walking with the press into the massive great shed where they roll the paper and make it <b>a massive place the size of a couple of football pitches</b> , we were just going in the door and somebody said to me they're no gonna be using their flash guns are they?	BNC (spoken section)
196	We were quite alone and <b>the great church, the size of a cathedral</b> , was unearthly in its floodlit, moonlit beauty.	BNC
197	So he looked about him , and saw three things. The first was a heap of glass bottles and flasks, all of them covered with dust and cobwebs. The second was <b>a glass dome, the size of a man</b> , and a little taller than our hero.	BNC
198	Dad was called, a discussion ensued whether the doctor should look at <b>the bump, the size of a pigeon's egg</b> , that had appeared.	BNC
199	The lumps are slowly getting bigger and I have <b>a new one</b> at the top of my leg, <b>the size of a pullet's egg</b> .	BNC
200	He showed me <b>a little thing, the size of a hazelnut</b> , in the palm of my hand, and it was as round as a ball.	BNC
201	<b>A piece</b> of this material, neutronium, <b>the size of a pinhead</b> might weigh a billion tonnes or more (depending upon the size of the pinhead!).	BNC
202	The piddock drills its hole into solid rock. It is <b>a small mollusc, the size of a mussel</b> , that starts life as a tiny free-swimming speck of jelly.	BNC
203	Her sizeable bottom and not-too-marvellous legs were thinly coated with bright yellow silk jeans ending just below the knee; her bare feet were thrust into pink mules with diamond spike-heels. She also wore <b>a diamond brooch</b> at her waist, <b>the size of a buckler</b> .	BNC
204	He cleared his throat. 'There's <b>a picture</b> appeared in her room, <b>the size of a postcard</b> , of a fellow with a crown of thorns. You know the sort of thing.'	BNC
205	Dendrocopos minor. The smallest <b>woodpecker</b> of the region, <b>the size of a Hedgesparrow</b> (p. 221 ); barred appearance is distinctive.	BNC
206	By its light he connected the hand to the arm of a dark suede coat. Hunched against the base of the pillar was <b>a round object, the size of a football</b> , covered with short, wiry hair.	BNC
207	Others were missing limbs, or hair. In the centre of the circle of dolls and children was <b>a metal cauldron, the size of a milk pan</b> .	BNC

208	At regular intervals on the circle are placed pictures of uniform size, either related to a central theme or without any specific relationship. On the circle is placed a second circle with <b>a small window, the size of a picture</b> . In the centre is a long paper fastener which permits the second circle to spin round so that the picture will appear in the window.	BNC
209	With two other men he worked his way rhythmically across the sheet, beating the second layer gently with rounded mallets until the starches produced from the pith welded all the strips together to form <b>a sheet, the size of the stone</b> , of white papyrus.	BNC
210	<b>A curing oven, the size of a car garage</b> , has been built specially for the project.	BNC
211	John lost an arm and a leg as a result of a motorcycle 12 years ago and he has been provided with <b>a £200 electronic device, the size of a cigarette pack</b> , that uses electric signals to relieve discomfort.	BNC
212	‘my sister had a boob reduction I know sacrilege’ ‘and why?’ ‘cos [sic] she had <b>boobs the size of mine</b> but she was a size ten she was tiny she looked ridiculous’	Spoken BNC2014
213	‘yeah we haven't had the flooding’ ‘fairly settled’ ‘yeah mum was talking about <b>hailstones the size of golf balls</b> the other day’	Spoken BNC2014
214	‘why don't you type in how many people make up Isis? because I don't know I'm confused because it can't be that many I used to think it was just in my ignorance’ ‘two hundred thousand’ ‘what? seriously?’ ‘mm mm’ ‘no that's crazy’ ‘fucking hell they've underestimated’ ‘rule <b>an area the size of Britain</b> ’ ‘jesus look at that it's er I I would definitely call it a third world war like you know fifty years later in the history books this'll be known as like a war I reckon this whole thing’	Spoken BNC2014
215	‘and have you noticed how those boxes of beer have got a lot smaller as well’ ‘yeah’ ‘ah they're gonna end up having <b>those really tiny cans the size of Red Bull</b> ’ ‘yeah yeah’ ‘selling beer like that like they do in Asia’	Spoken BNC2014
216	‘that's good the most important parts’ ‘yeah’	Spoken BNC2014



	‘but poor me I got two grains of sand in my shoes coming back but we couldn't stop because and I have got <b>blisters the size of Brighton</b> now’ ‘oh no’	
217	‘so you're impartial what did you think of the [unclear] Volvo’ ‘He's been selling it to all of my relatives this weekend’ ‘you want <b>something the size of a VW golf</b> and you want a Volvo then there you go I guess’	Spoken BNC2014
218	‘so I said do you know what? We'll just get on the train again it'll just be the same it'll all be fine we're just gonna go and so we looked for the TGV and there's this big massive’ ‘ <b>archway the size of this room</b> saying passport control to France’ <sup>4</sup>	Spoken BNC2014
219	‘cos it was boys at this end and girls at that although it was all one building’ ‘mm’ ‘it was all one building and across the playground were <b>the big high wall the size of that brick wall</b> that separated there was no girls or boys mixed at at anywhere er and er and so now then evidently er some of the English books and that from the girls’ side have been have surfaced’	Spoken BNC2014
220	‘bloody Nora how expensive is it?’ ‘what? Peanut butter?’ ‘no marmite’ ‘oh’ ‘three pounds’ ‘huh have you got <b>a jar the size of your head?</b> ’	Spoken BNC2014
221	‘I just had all the good stuff’ ‘nice and now I think you're ready and geared up’ ‘yep’ ‘for <b>a pizza the size of your head</b> ’	Spoken BNC2014
222	‘I think I think the day has been working towards’ ‘well done’ ‘ <b>pizza the size of my head</b> ’ ‘do it’	Spoken BNC2014
223	‘I think I think they just sort of yeah I think they're crawling in there from one of the other sides and then they're not using their brain to know that they've walked in they can walk out and they're panicking they're trying to flap out and not coming out er’ ‘yeah they've only got <b>a brain the size of a pea</b> ’	Spoken BNC2014
224	Woolley said, ‘you will come back here and stop the German air force from examining the hole which their	BNC

<sup>4</sup> As the speakers are not individually marked, it is unclear whether the two utterances were spoken by the same speaker with a pause in between, or if the first speaker was interrupted and the sentence was finished by a second speaker.

	artillery has just blown in the British Line, <b>a hole about the size of Lancashire</b> , and that will be the biggest waste of time of all, because the German Army found that hole an hour ago, and is now galloping through it as fast as its little legs will carry it, heading in the direction of ...' he snipped [...]	
225	Roll the mixture into <b>small balls about the size of walnuts</b> and place them on two large baking sheets.	BNC
226	Reliable figures are had [sic] to find, but there is little doubt that Sarawak – <b>an area about the size of England and Wales</b> – is today probably supplying about one quarter of the total raw hardwood exports in the world.	BNC
227	The TVA operated in <b>a vast impoverished region, about the size of England and Scotland</b> , and containing parts of seven states.	BNC
228	Each was on <b>cheap, discoloured A5 paper, about the size of pages</b> from a novel, the individual details clumpingly typed into the spaces provided in the print, and attested by the totally illegible signature of the then Standesbeamte.	BNC
229	<b>This transponder, about the size of a grain</b> of rice, is injected painlessly into the back of the dog's neck, and when a reader is passed across the skin the reference number can be taken.	BNC
230	<b>The 31-gram specimen, about the size of an apricot</b> , has properties in common with soils from the lunar highlands.	BNC
231	The BOND Sweater Machine is packed in <b>a convenient box</b> , with a handle, <b>about the size of an attaché case</b> , which makes it lightweight, portable and easy to store.	BNC
232	It usually takes the form of <b>a huge, shaggy white dog, about the size of a bull-calf</b> , which will pursue anyone it sees.	BNC
233	It was <b>a very small patch, about the size of a postage stamp</b> , and the two sides of it seemed to be splitting down the middle and opening slowly outwards, like a pair of shutters on some tiny window.	BNC
234	<b>Smaller spiders, about the size of a horse</b> , are ridden by the Goblins, and smaller ones are kept as pets.	BNC
235	Just <b>a small bowl, about the size of a teacup</b> ; made of a dull pewterish metal, leaf-thin with age; decorated with some worn beading round the rim, and on the sides a formal pattern of entwining lines.	BNC
236	I look down at what I tripped over; <b>a fallen branch, about the size of a man's arm</b> .	BNC
237	One of <b>the giant owls</b> of the region, <b>about the size of an Eagle Owl</b> (p. 177), but with longer tail, rounder head and no ear tufts, smaller yellow eyes set in a	BNC

	facial disc with concentric dark rings, and a black patch on the chin.	
238	Colour <b>a little more fondant, about the size of an egg</b> , with green food colouring and reserve, tightly wrapped, for the space creatures.	BNC
239	I've had a spot of bother for the past four or five years with my knee so I had these X-rays done and they found <b>a bone growth about the size of a pea</b> .	BNC
240	Their size varied considerably, from behemoths like Brontosaurus to <b>little scuttling beasts about the size of a hen</b> .	BNC
241	The memory card is <b>a small plastic card about the size of a credit card</b> .	BNC
242	The TVX system is effectively a camera-on-a-chip: camera and lens are integrated onto <b>one chip about the size of a postage stamp</b> , and it is designed to provide visual verification of the cause of an alarm at the time of an incident, and provide a method to distinguish actual emergencies from false alarms.	BNC
243	Physically, it is <b>a shrink-wrapped package about the size of a music CD package</b> that the user buys off the shelf, and it was pioneered here in the UK, in France and Australia before being introduced in the US.	BNC
244	PCMCIA is a standard, agreed between a large number of companies, which allows a range of devices to be built onto <b>a card about the size of a credit card</b> .	BNC
245	Fill it up with small pieces of wood, the drier the better, <b>hardwood about the size of your fist</b> .	BNC
246	Then summarise the main headings on a small card or <b>cards about the size of a postcard</b> .	BNC
247	Experts advise that sunscreens should be reapplied on a hourly basis ( <b>a dollop of cream about the size of a grape</b> is a good guideline for your face).	BNC
248	But according to him it's quite simple to make a bomb provided you can get hold of about eight kilograms of plutonium, <b>a lump about the size of an orange</b> .	BNC
249	A tame rabbit was brought in with <b>a large abscess about the size of an egg</b> on its cheek.	BNC
250	On Auckland's North Shore each householder is provided with <b>a small green bin about the size of a fish basket</b> .	BNC
251	(...) from the back bedroom in the bottom there's been <b>a hole about the size of a pipe</b> .	BNC (spoken section)

## Colour

252	Late afternoon sun spilled white shafts across the desk to light her hair with <b>a jewelled sheen the colour of pomegranates</b> .	BNC
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253	In the opposite direction, above us and to the left, was a high serac-edged glacial wall with, far below it, a run-out -- <b>a broad, lethargic river the colour of putty.</b>	BNC
254	However, if you don't mind fishing in <b>water the colour of Brown Windsor soup</b> , you may have good sport.	BNC
255	[...] as he drew out into the full brilliance of the moon something that shone with the colour of the moon itself, a circlet of gold on which stood a row of triangular shapes from each of which flashed a pebble, some green, some blue, <b>some red the colour of rubies.</b>	BNC
256	The drawback is that racing drivers work in an area where they are idolised by people whose idea of le dernier cri is <b>a logo-ed nylon pit-stop windcheater the colour of Day-Glo toothpaste.</b>	BNC
257	Red and white currants here in rows, berries like glass beads, gooseberries with <b>a ripeness the colour of rust</b> on their green cheeks.	BNC
258	And the woman seemed in no hurry to close it and shut out the dangerous night; she simply stood, looking down at the children and smiling. She was tall with <b>shining hair the colour of copper.</b>	BNC
259	Andrew and Virginia watched numbly as Horatia went to the door, returning a moment or two later with a small boy with silver-gold hair and <b>eyes the colour of aquamarines.</b>	BNC
260	At their feet a grassy bank shelved to white sand, and <b>a river the colour of emeralds</b> streamed by.	BNC
261	Downstream an ancient felucca lay in against the bank, its <b>hull the colour of granite.</b>	BNC
262	The room hadn't changed. The fire still smoked, the damp still grew <b>vegetable growths the colour of peaches</b> on the wall between the grimy windows.	BNC
263	Then he turned and hurried on, his fists clenched at his sides, <b>his face the colour of summer.</b>	BNC
264	Past little stands of foxglove in the green foreground before a copse, the floor of the wood swerves sharply down to <b>a fast stream the colour of nickel.</b>	BNC
265	The place seemed unusually full of lovely women, including an eight-foot mutant with <b>skin the colour of moonlight</b> -- but no Mala.	BNC
266	It was simply grey water in a steady stream falling on to <b>a sea the colour of metal</b> , on to a grey town.	BNC
267	The sun had set, and bands of <b>light the colour of opals</b> streaked the edges of the sky.	BNC
268	I stood up, in my grey skin, stacked gut and floral wraparound, <b>my hair the colour of London skies</b> -- under the bam, under the boo.	BNC
269	The squall moved rapidly away, fading into the distance like a memory, leaving behind it crystal-clear	BNC

	air and <b>a freshly washed sky the colour of forget-me-nots.</b>	
270	As the tiny head, covered in silky black hair, nestled warmly in the palm of her hand, she had looked up and met eyes full of tenderness and love, <b>eyes the colour of slate.</b>	BNC
271	The kitchen was a foreign place, and always; centred by a cutting board, <b>formica shelves the colour of butter and wicker</b> , low ceilings and no windows.	BNC
272	Her hands, with their swollen knuckles, rested on her knees. Because of her stoop she was forced to contemplate <b>her thick stockings, the colour of cocoa.</b>	BNC
273	She had a cloud of <b>short hair</b> curving in clinging waves about her head, <b>the colour of barley silk</b> , and under the feathery fringe her forehead bulged childishly, with room in it for a notable brain, the one thing about her that was not suavely curved and ivory-smooth.	BNC
274	They surveyed it together in the dressing-table glass, <b>heavy, thick stuff</b> falling to her elbows, <b>the colour of barley sugar.</b>	BNC
275	Where are you going John? 'I'm just going,' he said, <b>his face the colour of the ground</b> – yellow.	BNC
276	On the edge of Sheffield town centre the eye confronts <b>some long walls the colour of a storm</b> , so forbidding that not even the kids have made their mark.	BNC
277	The miller's wife was just as mean as her husband, but their daughter Neva was quite different; she was happy-natured and kind-hearted, sang all day at her work like a thrush, and was as beautiful as she was kind, with summer-blue eyes and <b>hair the colour of the sun's rays</b> at noon.	BNC
278	The demure Lily in her straw hat, a hat I could describe to you now, still, as well as if I had it here in front of me, the crown swathed in <b>a pale tulle the colour of a summer haze</b> ... in a long-sleeved, high-necked, pink-and-white striped blouse... a dark-blue hobble skirt, beside whom I walked across Regent 's Park in the spring of 1914.	BNC
279	As abruptly as it had started, the storm stopped and the sun shone from <b>a sky the colour of a Ceylon sapphire.</b>	BNC
280	I watched <b>water the colour of the Thames</b> at low tide drain away while I dried myself, and felt the horror of last night drain away with it.	BNC

281	On the edge of Sheffield town centre the eye confronts <b>some long walls the colour of a storm</b> , so forbidding that not even the kids have made their mark. <sup>5</sup>	BNC
282	She could see nothing except <b>a vivid scarlet blur, the colour of a London bus.</b>	BNC
283	Apart from regions of mountain pasture and forest, the plains of Castile afforded a bare landscape occasionally interrupted by <b>nondescript villages, the colour of the soil</b> from which they arose.	BNC

## Length

284	All the furniture was on a mammoth scale; <b>luxurious sofas the length of ocean liners</b> , and billiard tables the size of cricket pitches.	BNC
285	These led to towers. Each one had <b>a spiral staircase the length of a lighthouse</b> leading up to it and at the top lived a teacher.	BNC
286	Then she sent Nara to fetch the things she would need: <b>a piece of rope the length of the space</b> between her hands when she held out her arms; a supple willow twig, the length of the space between Nara's hands: a sprig of the dāntelo bush in flower: and some wheat flour and tobacco for her own payment.	BNC
287	Rather like a gigantic duck, it has webbed feet which leave <b>prints the length of a house</b> , and a loud honking cry.	BNC
288	The Government has set a curfew on <b>a mile-wide strip the length of the frontiers</b> with Mozambique and Zambia, with orders to shoot on sight.	BNC
289	Do you think his parents are going to be happy when he comes home for the holidays with <b>a scar the length of his face?</b>	BNC
290	Members who make up this House of Commons, including Mr. Speaker himself, each one of us could present the Government with <b>a list of the anomalies in the Bill the length of our arm.</b>	BNC
291	It must be great to be a human, Grimma thought, as <b>thorns the length of her hand</b> tore at her dress.	BNC
292	Roll out the reserved black fondant trimmings and cut out <b>a strip the length of the roof</b> and about 2.5cm (1 inch) wide.	BNC
293	Would you like to get into <b>a vehicle the length of a bus</b> with no extra tuition?	BNC (spoken section)
294	Then she sent Nara to fetch the things she would need: <b>a piece of rope the length of the space</b> between her	BNC

<sup>5</sup> This sentence is identical to example 276, but as they were found in two unrelated sources, the decision was made to include both in the statistics.

	hands when she held out her arms; <b>a supple willow twig, the length of the space</b> between Nara's hands: a sprig of the dāntelo bush in flower: and some wheat flour and tobacco for her own payment. <sup>6</sup>	
295	'because I remember hearing her her phone rang and sometimes I just work <b>the walk the length of the church</b> if we come out the same time'	Spoken BNC2014

### Width

296	Use <b>a small split cane the width of the seed tray</b> to make a series of depressions in the levelled compost.	BNC
297	In less than a second it would tear <b>a gap</b> in the highway <b>the width of the riverbed</b> .	BNC
298	And the trees, the trees alive in their darkness <b>and the moon the width of a V</b> in the cloud [...]	BNC
299	You need <b>a trench the width of a spade</b> and about 1½in deep.	BNC
300	There are regulations governing the safety of toys, which are tested to see if they will fit into <b>a tube the width of a child's throat</b> .	BNC
301	And I don't, can see where you're going to have <b>a strip the width of the room</b> and add on the width of the door on the end.	BNC (spoken section)
302	Along <b>the main trails, the width of a pavement</b> with walls like bulwarks on each side, there's a constant traffic, involving all ages.	BNC

### Height

303	<b>A blank wall the height of a house</b> on your right. Can't say I'd like to live next to a bakery.	BNC
304	He had been too young to read the note but he could still remember how that table had looked when he came in, <b>its top</b> at the time <b>the height of his own shoulder</b> .	BNC
305	It's terribly important to get the balance right between the levels of <b>plants the height of the trees</b> , shrubs and ground cover plants and the main areas of shade and sunlight, as well as the seasons at which each plant will be at its best.	BNC
306	Each year, 700 vehicles smash into bridges. But now there's a new type of warning system. <b>An infra-red light, the height of the bridge</b> , is sent across the road and if it's breached, a sign flashes up to warn the driver.	BNC

<sup>6</sup> This sentence is identical to example 286, the two come from the same source. The reason for listing each example under their own number is the clarity of presenting data, as well as the difference in punctuation.

### Shape

307	In an hour they were all ready and stood in the parlour looking humorously at each other in their best shirts of white linen and clean breeches. James's had <b>a brown mark</b> on the leg <b>the shape of an iron</b> .	BNC
308	His black necktie was steadied by <b>a gold pin the shape of a crucifix</b> .	BNC

### Breadth

309	The problem of closing the drawer was solved by fixing the trees in front of the gates and balustrade, and placing <b>an invisible hinge the breadth of the garden</b> between the trees and the flower beds.	BNC
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### Depth

310	The adamantium floor down there was inscribed with a maze of tiny coloured channels that bootsteps would never be able to wear away in a pattern suggestive of a cosmic map – and along all of those channels were spaced <b>little indentations the depth of a Fist's thumbprint</b> , each recess named with a rune.	BNC
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