Simplicity versus Complexity of Noun Group Structure in Print Commercial Advertising

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1 Introduction

Standard advertising "grammar" was defined by Leech (1966:105) as "linguistic choices made more frequently than elsewhere and how much more frequently these choices are made".

The current paper will define and determine the "standard" operating at the lowest syntactical level, the noun group, through statistical distribution analysis and will consider the ways in which this constituency contributes to both information and commendation.

1.1 Hypothesis

Having infinite potential for pre- and post-modification with embedded and subembedded structures, NGs are able to perform both informational functions and commendation. Although the NG can be one of the most loaded groups, NGs in commercial print advertising are simple and therefore their ability to persuade stems from the way they are so easily remembered. Multiply-modified noun groups (NG_{mm}) appear in longer copies or instances of role borrowing and can be product-specific as in the case of luxury commodities where the NG contributes sophistication, exquisiteness and emphasises connotations of overabundance.

The **method** consisted primarily of functional grammar analysis of a corpus of 50 advertisements (C_e) and their NG structure: simple (NG_s), complex (NG_c) and multiply-modified (NG_{mm}), as well as statistical interpretation of the results. The NG linguistic variable being studied was considered through their frequency per advertisement.

1.2 Corpus (C_e) Description

Written texts, i.e. [verbal] language (with consideration of visual artifacts where necessary) of 50 advertisements, were selected from random issues of British editions of the following magazines: *Time* (September 1991, July 1995, March 1996), *Newsweek* (August 1995, March 1996, June 2003,) and *The Economist* (June 2003, August 2003, September 2003,). The further variable of copy length was introduced and the corpus was subdivided into short copy (S-copy, 28 ads) and long copy (L-copy, 22 ads). A wide range of products was covered, starting from cigarettes (7), services such as banking and travel (16), watches (7), cars (6) technology (3); beer and alcoholic drinks (5); to food (3), detergents (1), and luxury products such as perfume (2).

2 The Noun Group
2.1 Noun Group Structure

A Noun Group (Richards 2002: 8) is defined as an expanded noun, although it can be quite often represented by a single entity (2), e.g.: 1."<u>The colours of a hot desert wind</u>…" versus 2. "<u>Nikon</u> makes them timeless", with the underlined noun groups above operating at the same rank. Complex noun groups usually include the following constituents within their structure: Premodifier/"The" + Head Noun/"colours" + Postmodifier/PrepP:"of a hot desert wind". Structural constituents can have various functions within the NG: a) the head noun has an experiential function (i.e. to represent the "thing" which can be [$\pm$ Animate], [+ Human]); b)the referer (here, the definite article "the") defines the scope of reference; c) postmodifiers narrow down the meaning of constituents, in our case the posmodifying PrepP is a constituent with an embedded NG_{mm} with its own referer ("a"), describer ("hot") and classifier ("desert").

NGs can become increasingly complex, embedding other groups, phrases, or even clauses (non-finite, relative, etc.):

e.g.: "The (Toyota) MR2 is <u>only one</u> **example** <u>of the</u> **spirit** of **creativity and innovation** taking hold at Toyota"

The structure of the underlined NG_{mm} functioning as attribute (traditionally subjective complement) in a relational attributive process has the following description:

<u>Premodification: **only one** + HEAD$_1$: **example** + Postmodification: **of the spirit of creativity and innovation taking hold at Toyota**</u>
Head$_1$ Postmodification structure: Prep Phrase:**of** + NG$_2$ {premod: **the** + head$_2$: **spirit** + posmodification}
Head$_2$ postmodification (PrepP: **of** + Head$_3$ - 2 coord NG$_3$: **creativity and innovation**) + Postmodification
Head$_3$ postmodification : participial clause – **taking place at Toyota**

Starting from the assumption that the NG is a sensitive index of style, Quirk (1972:857) demonstrated how prose, fiction, and informal spoken English have significantly greater proportion of simple NGs (less than one-third) as opposed to scientific writing, which displays a much higher proportion of NG_{mm}. The prose/informal spoken English sample was also characterized by a much stronger association of simple to subject and complex to non-subject, as well as a proportion of nearly one half simple NGs, represented by pronouns and names.

Other syntactic functions of NGs deployed by the C_e corpus, besides that of subject (prevalent in NG_s, non-subject being predominant in NG_c and NG_{mm}) are: a) as an object: "When you make *a great beer*, you don't have to make *great fuss*" (Heineken); b) complement: "For generations Tuborg has been *part of the noble art of beer drinking*" (Tuborg); c) adjunct: "Nikon takes photography *to new dimensions*" (Nikon).

In order to demonstrate the existence of standard versus nonstandard linguistic choices at NG level, the total C_e 653 NGs were divided into:

1) **Simple** NGs (NG_s) – including noun groups with no heavier modification than closed-system items, with a further distinguished sub-class of pronouns and names;
2) **Complex** NGs (NG_c) – including NGs with: a closed-system item in premodification, plus a single adjective premodifier or a prepositional phrase postmodification;
3) **Multiply-modified** NGs (NG_{mm}) – NGs with heavier modification.

2.2 Class I (Class$_1$) – Simple Noun Groups

In the closed-system premodifying items of Class$_1$, the following structural elements were included: a) predeterminers, e.g.: all, both, half; b) articles (definite, indefinite, zero); c) demonstratives; d) passives; e) inclusives, e.g.: no, neither, every, each, either; and f) closed-system quantifiers, e.g.: many, few, little, some, any.

NG_s (see table 1 below) predominate in the corpus under scrutiny (346, 53%), advertising language falling from this point of view into the category of informal spoken English and prose fiction from Quirk's findings (1972:933).

			Subject position
NG_s	346	Pronouns 153	115
		Names 82	
NG_c	128		16
NG_{mm}	179		19
Total	653		

Table 1: NG structural distribution within the C_e

Moreover, the subclass of pronoun and name NG_s has a high occurrence rate (68%), which is only natural since high rates of personal pronouns use are expected in any communicative though unidirectional exchange. The rate of product/brand name frequency is even higher at an individual level with 6-8 name counts/ad (including headline, copy, slogan, and image), the repetition of product name contributing to mnemonic functions.

Within Class$_1$ pronouns, top frequency was attained by version of "YOU" (your, yours – 39%) the explicit, yet ambiguous between Tu/Vous, formal/informal intimacy/distance, voice of the narratee. This narrative voice, "an absence of identity" (Cook 1992:180**)**, is furthermore ambiguous between a fictional narrator and the real-world company representatives, or copy-writers. "YOU" acknowledges the existence of the consumer, connects with them, and appeals at an emotional level.

"WE" (our, ours 27%) functions as either we-including-you expressing solidarity as in: "And let'*s* talk choice"(British Telecommunications), or we-exclusive-of-you functioning as addresser/sender's voice: "*We* made this watch *for you*" (Patek Philippe).

That copy-writers strive for precise identification of their product or service is evident in the plethora of definite reference and reference restriction through demonstratives, possessives and inclusives (either referring to a group as a whole "all", or as individuals: "any", "every") and if name mentions are added as indicators of unique reference, almost 45% of the NG_s have restricted and unique reference

The closed-system quantifier "many" under its analytical comparative form "more" may be more common per sample but is far less popular [i.e. not standard], in the whole C_e. The following DHL ad is, for instance, designed on the "*more*" leit-motif as the "unique selling proposition" (USP) of the service:

Slogan: "*More* reliability"
Copy: "The new DHL offers you *more* performance, *more* service and *more* options in more than 220 countries".

Similarly, non-standard for advertising NG structure is the persistent avoidance of negative and non-assertive pronominal forms: 1 token: "When it comes to tight hairpins at high speeds, *nothing* takes them better" (Toyota); 2 tokens: "Needs *no* battery" (Seiko).

2.3 Class II (Class$_2$) - NG$_c$

Class$_2$ includes 20% of the NGs of the C_e and comes as such on the third place after NG$_{mm}$ (see table 1 above) both in frequency and as a NG$_c$ in the subject position.

As stated before, the function of postmodification (post-m) is to narrow down the meaning of NG constituents. Explicitness in post-m decreases as we move from relative clauses to indefinite clauses and then to prepositional phrases, due to the specifying power of the relative pronoun and of the non-finite predicator. Therefore, in Class$_2$ post-modification explicitness is least apparent as it only includes the prepositional phrase (PrepP) modifiers (T_{rel}, T_{del}, $\pm$ T_{pass}) (Roberts 1964). This runs contrary to exact labeling purposes in advertising and could represent a functional explanation for the poorest representation of NG$_c$ in the corpus.

In PrepP postmodification, the highest rate was represented by the periphrastic genitive form with the preposition "of", a result consistent with the literature (Quirk 1972:885). Postmodification with "of" is three times more frequent than finite/non-finite clausal modification and derives from kernel strings with "have" inserts (Roberts 1964). Our findings do not coincide however with those obtained by Leech (1966:133) who underscored a tendency of advertising English to use brand names (not necessarily product names), and nouns of place and time with synthetic genitive modification. Only one count ("Cartier's Pasha Watch") of the synthetic genitive post-m was found, which testifies to a propensity for the balanced, more objective style of the analytical genitive.

Other minor postmodification types included: a) PrepP with other prepositional head than "of": "the calcium *in* milk"; b) apposition: "the name *DHL*"; c) Adv-p: "And you'll be seeing it on roads *everywhere*".

Standard premodification (pre-m) of Class$_2$ was represented by: a) qualitative adjective groups (Adj G) (51%) functioning as describers: "a busy flight", "a great beer", with "new" as basic product quality: "*New* dreams, *new* world" (Boeing). b) superlatives (inflected Adj G): "the *lowest* fare"; c) comparatives: "Only the few ever discover the *finer* points" (Tio Pepe); d)compounds: "With *cutting-edge* thinking, rigorous delivery and an absolute commitment to long-term client value" (Deutsche Bank).

Non-standard pre-m was represented by classifying nominals ("guide books", "whatever name"), or adverbial elements (DHL. "Worldwide express").

2.4 Class III (Class$_3$) – NG$_{mm}$

Multiple modification has an extremely variegated quality and is cultivated with a greater commitment than complex modification in Class$_2$ since its ultimate goal is to define, underscore, and extol the product qualities. In our statistics (see table 1 above)

NG$_{mm}$ comes in second place after NG$_s$ and before NG$_c$. Figure 1 below presents the distribution of bare pre-m, bare post-m and mixed modification in NG$_{mm.}$
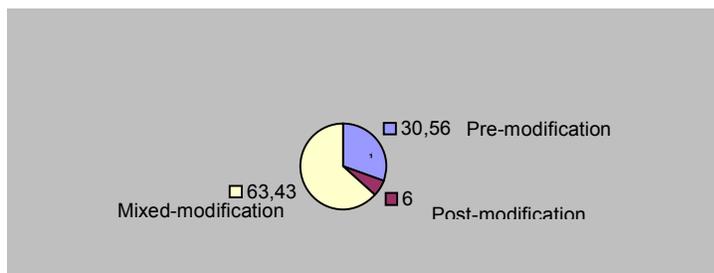

Figure 1. Modification in NG$_{mm}$.

2.4.1 Premodification in NG$_{mm}$

Statistically, pre-m in NG$_{mm}$ covers 30.57% of the total 179 cases in Class$_3$. It has at least two basic functions: a) to throw into "thematic" position NG constituents and then through climactic ascent, to focus on the head noun: "the first ultra-low Tar" (New Salem); b) to achieve utmost structural economy by clustering modifiers in pre-head position. If the pre-m constituents were to be shifted to a post-m position, explicitness would definitely increase but only at the expense of greater effort to remember.

A. Adjectives in pre-m are by far the most frequent type and are particularly associated with two attachments to their heads:

<u>Scope-expanding</u> adjectives: "*global* leader in air express"(DHL); (+ emphasizer: "truly) *global* airline" (Thai); "*worldwide* reputation for service" (Thai); "*European* leader in parcel delivery" (DHL); "*world*-class beer" (Double Dark).

<u>Mostly **scope-restricting adjectives**</u>: "the *single* comfortable flight"(Scandinavian Airlines); **focusing adjuncts** : "the *only* watch"(Seiko); **time-relationship adjuncts**: "the *first* ultra-low tar" (New Salem); **emphasizers** with heightening effects: "*true* driving pleasure"; **synthetic or analytic superlatives**: "one of the world's *finest* beers" (Cartier), "the world's *most demanding* clients"(Deutsche Bank); **superlative absolute, especially amplifiers** denoting extreme degree, scaling upmost from the norm: "the *perfect* balance of power and control" (Toyota)

The special type of **inherent, informative adjectives**, usually characteristic of scientific registers, is frequently found in car advertisements, such as: "*ventilated*", "*independent* (part)", "*tight*". These adjectives contribute to what is termed "factual", objective claims, clearly verifiable by reference to the external world. (physical attributes of the car), as opposed to "evaluative", subjective judgments which are not verifiable. Most common here is the dynamic adjective type (i.e. can be employed with the continuous aspect and/or the imperative): "*constant* and *even* tension" (Rolex) versus the static: "a flame *blue* sky" (Nikon).

Piling up adjectives, either adverbially submodified as in "extraordinarily smooth, mellow, dark beer" (Dark Beer) often includes alliterative effects as in the following Chanel advertisement: "**s**ensual, **s**weet and **s**picy elements to create a hint of sexiness and naughtiness". The main function of alliteration is to enhance the product appeal and memorability (Harris, 1986:14).

B. Lengthy NG$_{mm}$ premodification usually combines NG premodification with adjectives as in the following examples: 1."our 23.000 satellite-linked computer terminals"(Lufthansa); 2)"its new 2.0-litre 16-valve twin cam turbo" (Toyota).

Pre-modifying compounds may be represented by embedded adjective groups ("high-end fault-tolerant resources" - +hp) or embedded NGs ("its new 2.0 litre 16-valve twin cam turbo" – Toyota).

2.4.2 Postmodification in NG$_{mm}$

Post-m as the single heavy NG$_{mm}$ is not well represented in the sample (6% - see Figure 1 above) and if we exclude cases of deceptive bare post-mofifiers such as plural noun heads – actually zero modified – and A$_{31}$ which is an instance of religious role-borrowing exhibiting half of the bare post-m counts, the most obvious conclusion is that bare post-m is not only nonstandard for advertising, but practically an unattested NG modification type. Moreover, even the cases of relative clause post-m in ad no 31 (A$_{31}$, see role borrowing below)- "Christmas Prayer" (New York Life Insurance) of the following type, have inherent pre-m: a)"that / which divides them", "that which unites them" – an in-built closed-system pre-determiner of the type: "the" + Demon (Roberts, 1964); b) "all / who work for a world of reason and understanding" (zero article); c)"the good / that lies in every man's heart" – a describer as NG head.

2.4.3 Mixed Modification in NG$_{mm}$

Mixed modification defines 63.5% of the C$_e$ (see Figure 1) and consists of a closed-system pre-modifying unit plus one or more open-class pre-modifiers (adjectives, nouns), and one or more postmodifiers (PrepP, non-finite clauses, definite relative clauses). In this conglomeration postmodifying structures can be said to have similar functions to units placed in the clause rheme for focus and end-weight. It is likely they are placed there in order to make them more memorable and lend to the perception that they are newsworthy: e.g. "the presence of an object of **rare perfection**".
Complexity in mixed modification can theoretically continue ad infinitum since each post-modifier may contain another potentially expandable element in its turn. This catenation is made possible by:

1) NG operating within a PrepP functioning as the object of that preposition. The following is an example of 4th degree embedding (embedded NG$_1$ within a PrepP$_1$ within a NG within a PrepP$_2$ within a NG$_2$):
    1. "the presence of an object of rare perfection"
    2. embedded PrepP$_1$: of an object of rare perfection
    3. embedded NG$_1$ /object of prep$_1$: an object of rare perfection
    4. embedded PrepP$_2$: of rare perfection
    5. embedded NG$_2$ /object of prep$_2$: rare perfection
2) Defining relative clauses rankshifted so that they can function as modifiers of heads within NG$_{mm}$
    1. -introduced by "that": "an open solution *that delivers business continuity*" (+hp),
    2. -or zero relative: "the commitment *DHL shows*" (DHL)
3) Relative clause + PrepP embedding:
    "a company *that can take real care of your business*"
    1. Embedded NG in pre-m + embedded relative clause in post-m:
    "a *service* partner *who delivers promptly*" (DHL)
    2. Submodified adjective premodifier + PrepP + relative clause post-m:
    "a *decidedly* young scent *for those* who dare to dream"
4) Non-finite clauses, which are in themselves a means of syntactic compression (lack distinction of mood, modality) and function as adjectival groups: a)

(Coordinated) infinitive clauses: "Your passion to push harder, to make it happen, to get it done"; b) Present participle clauses (T_{rel} + T_{del}): "a rental car waiting for you on the other side of the globe"; c) Agential past participle ($T_{passive}$ + T_{rel} + T_{del}) acquiring temporary reference (Quirk, 1972:911): "Only Cognac / made from grapes / grown in Cognac's best regions, is entitled to be called Fine Champagne Cognac".

2.4.4 Role-borrowing

NG_{mm} appear particularly frequently in cases of role-borrowing, i.e. linguistic elements specific for other registers accommodated by advertising. Extraneous, non-standard advertising elements are most often encountered in products requiring a more "technical" description, such as cars, electronics, which, in order to persuade and sound informative, comply with the scientific register as in A_{34} for the SAAB 9000 CS model. In this case the ratio of NG_s/NG_{mm} is 6/12 (**0.5**), i.e. the ratio is reversed, compared to the total C_e corpus, with a single NG_s in subject position versus seven NG_{mm} in non-subject positions.

An example of borrowing from the religious register is the advertisement for New York Life Insurance – A_{31} - with the headline: "Christmas prayer", and where the ratio 7 NG_s/ 8 NG_{mm} is higher (**0.8**) but still below zero.

In order to demonstrate that these advertisements are not typical of the advertising group structure, we have calculated a standard distribution ratio of NG_s/NG_c + NG_{mm} for the 22 long-copy advertisements in C_e as:

median NG_s/median (NG_c + NG_{mm})
= 293/231 $\cong$ 56% > 44% $\Rightarrow$ a standard of NG_s/NGc + NG_{mm} $\boxed{1.27}$

Figure 3 (below) illustrates exactly where A_{31} and A_{34} are positioned relative to the standard.

2.4.5 Other Functions of Weighty Modification

Overloaded NGs increase structural complexity and are meant to shed a complete and in particular, a commendatory light on the product. As already mentioned, multiple pre-m is often associated with rankshifted relative clauses as modifiers of noun heads, extensively complemented by coordination in a desire to hold attention and, by making a serious impact and contribute to recall, as in the example below:

A_{21} (DHL): "DHL Worldwide Express, *global leader in air express*, Danzas, *global leader in air and ocean freight*, and Deutsche Post Euro Express, *European leader in parcel delivery* have joined together under the name DHL to create a new global standard" – 3 coordinated NG names with 3 NG_{mm} appositions in post-m.

The function of such complex, coordinated NGs is to perform precise descriptive-informative purposes, to sound factual and scientific, and sometimes to connote fastidiousness and sophistication at the associative level, as in the following Thai advertisement (A_{24}) with standard NG_s/NG_c +NG_{mm} = 3/10 = **0.3**

Headline: "Enjoy *Royal Orchid Service* on a truly global airline.
Copy: *Thai's worldwide reputation for service* continues to grow along with *a route network that now spans the globe*. *Royal Orchid Service* stands for *gourmet food, vintage French wines, friendly ground staff, charming cabin crew*, and *a fresh orchid* for every passenger. So, no matter *which class you fly* or *which of the 73 destinations you're flying to*, you'll be glad you chose Thai.
Slogan: Thai. *The airline that's smooth as silk*."

Chanel A_{44} is somewhere in between with a standard ratio of complexity 2/5 (**0.4**). (see Figure 2 below) Long, flowing noun groups suggest seduction:

"Chance. Chanel.
The unexpected new Chanel fragrance. A decidedly young scent for those who dare to dream. Fresh, floral notes merge with sensual, sweet and spicy elements to create a hint of sexiness and delicious naughtiness"

We have seen that what is generally accepted in literature and empirically discernible as role borrowing has a reasonable standard ratio of complexity ranging between 0.5-0.8. The results show that heavy and complex NG modification (a $NG_s/NG_c + NG_{mm} = 0.3$-$0.4$ above) is a signal of something more than mere intellectual appeal, commendatory effects or reason-adding functions: it is a lofty pompous language that attracts attention to itself, through its extravagance and overabundance.

In such situations there is no interest in brevity; no feature is of lesser importance and language resources are overtly exploited. A legitimate conclusion would therefore be that more complex syntactic structures have a strong association with conspicuously sophisticated copy for luxury products that might also indicate a more polite, 'softer' sales approach.

2.4.6 Block Language. NGs as Major Realisation of an Ad

Block language (Quirk, 1972: 414) is defined as the language of posters, labels, sign-posts, etc. where no other constituent except the NG and sometimes Adv-G or Adj-G suffice for effective communication since context usually precludes ambiguous interpretations. A NG can function as the sole representation of a minor clause since it emphasizes key-words and contributes language economy (Bruthiaux, 1996).

Advertisements for luxury products such as perfume are especially prone to NG structural exploitation. Since smells do not have denotations, perfumes cannot subscribe to factual descriptions and instead exploit the resources of vaguer, more abstract language, including superlatives, subjective opinions, metaphor, etc. (Shimp, 1978: 198). Moreover, NGs as all other types of disjunctive language (Leech, 1966), communicate at the sublogical level and the advertisement's claims cannot be challenged no matter how exaggerated they might seem. Commonly, NGs function as attention-triggers and, together with frequent use of nominal groups, contribute to memorability (Nayak, 2002: 6).

The Chanel copy is based on 7 NGs, out of which only two NG_{mm} are in apposition to the brand and product name (NG_s) and only 2 are verb groups (VG). In A_{12} (Cartier) a similarly NG-slanted composition with Adj-G minor clauses (see ad below) in independent position inclines the balance in favor of participant roles: carrier and attributes. The only two processes expressed by the relational attributive "to be"VG specific to descriptions, are of intensive type and assign the object-carrier new attributes. Commendation and attitude ("exceptional", "most outstanding") are therefore lavishly bestowed on the product: Headline: *Cartier. The Pasha Watch*; Brand name NG_s is apposition to NG_c product name.

Copy:
(1) Historic. Classic. Bold.
1. Sentence fragments – Adj G

(2) Cartier Pasha Watch **is**   (2a) *the renowned jeweler's most outstanding tribute to men of this era*.
2a. NG_{mm} the attribute mapped into the complement

(3) An exceptional watch, crafted from a gold ingot.
3. NG_{mm} also attribute but "fragment" to obtain focus effects, with agentive past participle clause in post-m.

(4)Powerful, pure [and] distinguished, watertight, designed to capture <u>the spirit of those who thrive on the prospect of challenge, of conquest.</u>	4. Attributes expressed by Adj-G coordination, agential past participial clause functioning as Adj-G. NG_{mm} with embedded Prep P with embedded relative clause: "the spirit (PrepP) **of those** (Rel cl) *who thrive on the prospect of challenge, of conquest"* Rel clause with embedded PrepP and embedded NG: "*the prospect* (PrepP) *of* (NG) *challenge,* (PrepP)*of* (NG) *conquest.*
Decidedly in time with our time. *5. This* **is** *the ultimate watch.*	5.NG_s – carrier + Attributive Process + NG_c Attribute
Slogan: 6. Cartier. L'arte d'être unique.	6. Brand name NG_s in apposition to NG_{mm}

Except for the two finite clauses (2) and (5), the text rests on minor clauses with embedded structures of greater depth and complexity. NGs successfully substitute for full sentences due to their ability to substitute for predication and therefore to compress and essentialize. This is to be explained transformationally through the fact that adjectives, PrepP, non-finite clauses as NG modifiers, derive from relative clauses through T_{rel}, T_{del}, $\pm T_{pass}$, $\pm T_{NM}$, with "be" and less often "have" VG deleted in the surface structure (Roberts, 1964). As such, NGs have a great propensity for carrying describers of product qualities and attitude, which are the ultimate goals of descriptive copies.

2.5 Standard NG Ratio for Long and Short Copies

In order to demonstrate the existence of standard advertising language we have derived a statistically-based interval within which the linguistic variable, in our case NG complexity, can oscillate. This is not because it is necessary for all advertisements to fall within the interval in order for them to be considered successful, but in order to identify to what extent they deviate from their own internal standards.

The derived common denominator was arrived at through statistical analysis of the NG structure in the two sub-groups of 22 long copy (L-copy) and 28 short copy (S-copy) advertisements. The "long" and "short" distinction was introduced for reasons of standard deviation as it is obvious for NG structure to be constrained by copy-length. For instance, cigarette advertisements are almost invariably short whereas car and technical product advertisements are long. An average for NG_s – to point to simplicity - and another average for NG_c + NG_{mm} – indicative of complexity - were calculated for each L-copy and S-copy sub-groups.

For the S-copy advertisements comprising 113 NG_s(62.8%), 35 NG_c(19.4%) and 32 NG_{mm} (17.8%) the following standard ratio was obtained:

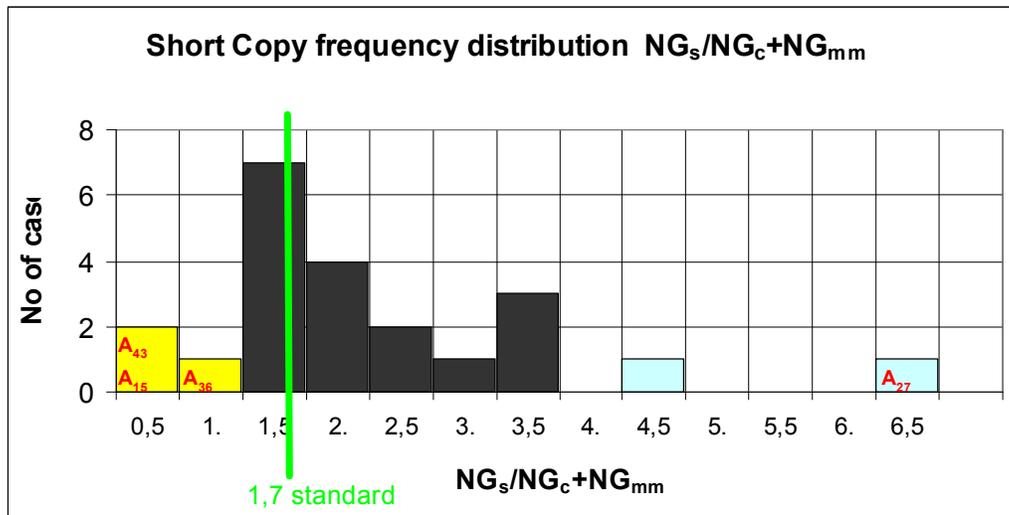**62.8 > 37.2 = 1.7** Their distribution is seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Short copy standard distribution of NG_s/NG_c+NG_{mm}

For the L-copy (Figure 3) advertisements comprising 293 NG_s ($\approx$ 56%), 231 NG_c + NG_{mm} (44%) and the obtained ratio was:

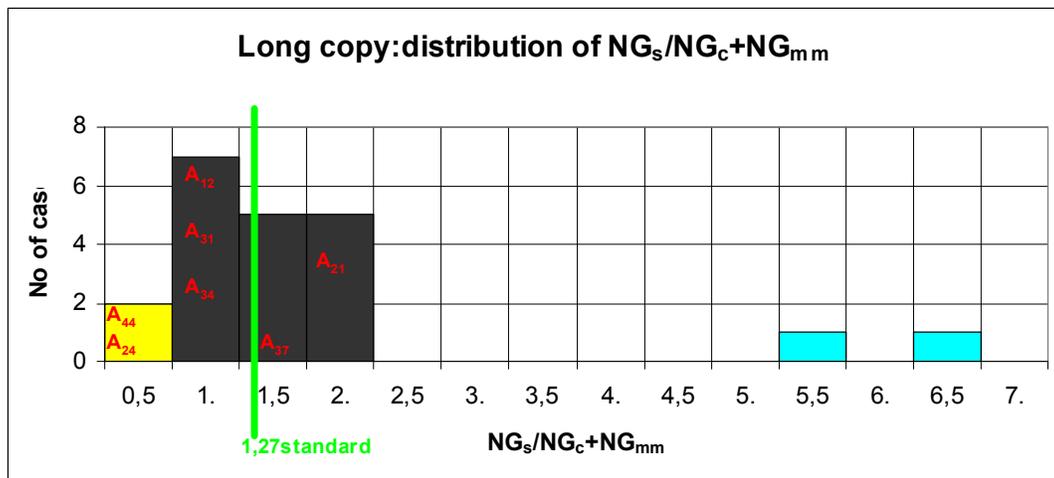**Long copy standard $NG_s/NG_c+ NG_{mm}$ ratio: 56 > 44 = $\boxed{1.27}$**

Figure 3. Long copy standard distribution of NG_s/NG_c+NG_{mm}

2.5.1 Discussion

According to statistics, standard advertising English includes a high frequency of simple NGs versus more complex and multiply-modified NGs in both S- and L-copy. Contrary to expectations, no strong association of **L-copy** and NG_c + NG_{mm} was found, the ratio being above 1. The frequency histogram illustrates distributions tightly clustered around the mean (1.27) with non-standard, deviant distributions widely scattered. Such deviations, even including reversed ratio distributions of heavy NG_{mm} exceeding NG_s is only to be found in two cases: A_{24} (Thai) and A_{44}(Chanel), discussed above as examples of sophistication, exquisiteness, stately pompous language, and even aggression.

The following seven advertisements, although below standard, have a more balanced, standard-clustered distribution. Ads showing a modest **standard deviation**

are usually attributed to role-borrowing, and can even be perceived as impinging on non-standard specificity. Technical, electronic services ads which presuppose employment of informational, more elaborated structures, have a lower standard deviation (Mitsubishi: 1,16; Nuvis:1.23) than cases of role borrowing (0,5 – 0.8) and are markedly lower than the two extreme cases A_{24} and A_{44} mentioned above (0.3-0.4).

At the other extreme are three L-copy ads (Patek Philippe, Deutsche Bank, Seiko) which, though offering "serious" technical products and services such as bank services and watches, bring forth conspicuously informational content, and prefer a more intimate approach which exploits the potential of NG_s for intimacy and involvement at the expense of more elaborate structures.

S-copy comprises ads whose basic texture included the headline, the slogan, and not more than 1 or 2 body copy sentences or sentence fragments. Five of the short-copy advertisements having either only NG_s (4) or only complex NG_{mm}(1) were not included in the graph since no ratio could be either calculated or graphically represented when a variable was missing. Only in 3 out of the 28 samples, did the proportion of heavily modified NGs exceed the simple NGs with a ratio below standard. (0.25 – 0.66) (Chicken, Stuveyssant, Boeing).

The greatest majority, however, are very close to the standard, clustered within the interval 1-2, a relative frequency of 0.5 with 11 advertisements falling within this range, and the rest deploying an even more marked tendency towards simplicity. Extreme simplicity is exhibited by Singapore Airlines advertisement (A_{27}) with just one NG_{mm} and 6 NG_s: Headline: "Where do *you* need to be?"/How will *you* get there?/Does *it* matter?/ Yes, *it* matters." Slogan: "*The journey* is *the destination*" Signature line: "*A great way to fly.*"

3 Conclusion

Standard NG distribution defined as the most frequent, median-clustered distribution is represented by a manifest predilection for simplicity versus complexity. In both long and short copies, standard NG distribution has a value of $NG_s/NG_c + NG_{mm} > 1$. Out of the 653 NGs examined, 53% were represented by NG_s a proportion which is maintained even when the distinction short versus long copy is introduced. While in S-copy the ratio of simple versus complex is $NG_s/NG_c + NG_{mm} = 1.7$, in L-copy the ratio is lower, 1.27 but still considerably biased towards simplicity which justifies the conclusion that complexity is not a standard for either short or long copy. Advertisements showing a modestly higher proportion of complex NGs are either attributed to role borrowing or to product type (technical products) comprising informational, more complex constituents. Whenever technical products prefer simplicity the approach offers more intimacy and involvement. A more complex NG structure was generally observed to have a strong association with sophisticated copy for luxury products.

NGs frequently represent the only textual realization of an advertisement and contribute to economy. As such, NGs are able to successfully substitute for full sentences due to their ability to substitute predication and contribute to memorability through emphasis on key word heads.

Advertising language except for technical, role borrowing and luxury copy, is biased towards keeping the NG simple, informal, as well as easy to process and remember.

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