

## **Why indefinite pronouns are different**

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### **1 The problem and the initial data**

Indefinite pronouns differ from common nouns in English and a number of other languages in their position or some other feature of the construction they form with the adjectival phrases (APs) that modify them. This squib intends to throw some more light on their curious behavior by attempting to offer a new analysis.

In a recent paper in reply to Kishimoto (2000), Larson and Marusič (= L&M) (2004) list the following properties of NPs containing indefinite pronouns and APs in arguing for the option of a postnominal AP position in deriving the relevant structures.

a) Unlike NPs containing common nouns, NPs containing indefinite pronouns, or more exactly, pronominals expressing quantificational meanings (Qprons henceforth), always have postnominal APs:

- (1) a. every interesting book  
b. \*every book interesting  
c. \*interesting everything  
d. everything interesting

b) Qprons allow for the recursion of postnominal APs, unlike common nouns:

- (2) a. the explored navigable rivers  
b. \*the rivers explored navigable  
c. everyone present capable of lifting a horse  
d. any place available accessible by bike

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c) Qprons do not permit uninflected measure phrases:

- (3) a. a [23-inch-long] rope  
b. a rope [23 inches long]  
c. \*anything [23-inch-long]  
d. anything [23 inches long]

d) No adjective that can be used only attributively can occur with Qprons:

- (4) a. some live thing  
b. This thing is alive/\*live.  
c. \*a thing live  
d. a thing alive  
e. \*something live  
f. something alive

e) Only stage-level interpretation is available in Qpron – AP constructions, i.e., the individual-level interpretation available in (5a) below, according to which the stars have the general property (size, luminosity, etc.) of visibility, but they needn't be visible now, is not possible in (5b), and neither is it possible in (5c).

- (5) a. the visible stars (include Capella, Betelgeuse, and Sirius)  
b. the stars visible  
c. (Show me) everything visible

f) Unlike prenominal APs, which allow for both restrictive and nonrestrictive interpretations, postnominal APs and APs in construction with Qprons only tolerate restrictive interpretation.

- (6) a. Every unsuitable word was deleted  
'Every word was deleted, they were unsuitable.'  
'Every word that was unsuitable was deleted.'  
b. Every word unsuitable was deleted.  
# 'Every word was deleted, they were unsuitable.'  
'Every word that was unsuitable was deleted.'  
c. Everything unsuitable was deleted.  
# 'Everything was deleted, everything was unsuitable.'  
'Everything that was unsuitable was deleted.'

g) Comparative adjectives with complements can precede common nouns and then may yield incompatible readings; no such reading is available in Qprons followed by comparative APs.

- (7) a. a taller person than Max  
b. #a taller person than this bookshelf  
c. a person taller than this bookshelf  
d. someone taller than this bookshelf

Larson and Marusič (2004) conclude that the NPs containing Qprons and APs cannot be derived from an [AP – N] structure by moving the noun in front of the AP, as Abney (1987) or Kishimoto (2000) proposed. Rather, they derive from structures of the form of (8a), where the Qpron corresponds to the D-N unit, or from (8b), where it is a morphologically complex D. Prenominal APs arise either by AP-preposing or from originally prenominal APs, cf. (9).

- (8) a. [<sub>DP</sub> D -N AP]  
b. [<sub>DP</sub> D [<sub>NP</sub> 0] AP]

- (9) a. [<sub>DP</sub> D AP<sub>i</sub> NP *t<sub>i</sub>* ]  
b. [<sub>DP</sub> D AP NP]

## 2 More data, more questions

We will take as our starting point L&M's (2004) conclusion that the APs occurring with Qprons must always be predicative. This is the characteristic that accounts for most of the properties listed above, and especially for those under c) through f). But the fact that these adjectives are predicative does not reveal why Qprons are different from common nouns with respect to the positioning of the AP. Note that their analysis is no more than a stipulation: Qprons must be followed by APs. Besides, the curious behavior of Qprons is conspicuous also in languages in which APs are as a rule prenominal, such as German, Russian, or Hungarian. Compare the following examples from Hungarian.

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- (10) a. [Mi lehetetlen]-t akar-sz?  
what impossible-ACC want-2SG  
'What do you want that's impossible?'
- b. [Bárki franciá]-val beszél-ek.  
anyone French-with speak-1SG  
'I'll speak with anyone French.'
- c. [Valaki [<sub>AP</sub> Anná-hoz hasonló]]-t látt-am.  
someone Anna-to similar-ACC saw-1SG  
'I saw someone similar to Anna.'
- d. \*[Francia bárki]-vel beszél-ek.  
French anyone-with speak-1SG
- (11) a. [Az [<sub>AP</sub> Anná-hoz hasonló] lány]-t látt-am.  
the Anna-to similar girl-ACC saw-1SG  
'I saw the girl similar to Anna.'
- b. \*[A lány [Annához hasonló]]-t láttam.

But even though there are no postnominal APs, the generalization holds that the APs cooccurring with Qprons must be predicative. In the following examples *lopott* 'stolen' is a lexical adjective derived from the verb *lop* 'steal' just like the closely related past participle *el-lop-ott* 'PERFECTIVE PFX-steal-PPRT, stolen'. However only the former can occur predicatively and, consequently, in construction with a Qpron.

- (12) a. A kiállított autók lopott-ak voltak.  
the exhibited cars stolen-PL were  
'The cars exhibited were stolen.'
- b. \*A kiállított autók ellopottak voltak.
- c. Jelentsd, ha [bármi lopott]-at talál-sz.  
report-IMP if anything stolen-ACC find-2sg  
'Report if you find anything stolen.'
- d. \*Jelentsd ha bármi ellopottat talál-sz.

Moreover, even in a language that has postnominal APs, as in French, Qprons are not simply followed by APs but are separated from them by the linker *de*, as was first noticed in case of the following examples by Kayne (1994).

- (13) a. Qui \*(de) sérieux as-tu rencontré?  
 who DE serious have-you met  
 b. Rien \*(de) extraordinaire n'est arrivé ce matin  
 nothing DE extraordinary not-is happened this morning

Similar linkers surface in modifier constructions in a number of other languages, as the Romanian example below illustrates, for which Rubin (2002) proposes the structure in (14c).

- (14) a. Problema este (\*de) grea.  
 problem-the is DE tough  
 'The problem is tough.'  
 b. Problema este curios \*(de) grea.  
 problem-the is curious DE tough  
 'The problem is curiously tough.'  
 c. [<sub>ModP</sub> curios [<sub>Mod</sub> de] [<sub>AP</sub> grea]]

His 'Modifier Hypothesis' accords well with facts from other languages, including Rubin's examples from Chinese and Tagalog, or the Hungarian prenominal, and often non-predicative, attributes in (15)-(16).

- (15) a. [<sub>DP</sub> a [<sub>NP</sub> kenyér [<sub>PP</sub> a polc alatt/tegnap-ról]]  
 the bread the shelf below/yesterday-from  
 'the bread below the shelf/from yesterday'  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> a [<sub>ModP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> polc alatt/tegnap P<sub>0</sub>]<sub>i</sub> [[<sub>Mod</sub> -i ] [<sub>NP</sub> kenyér t<sub>i</sub> ]]]  
 'idem'
- (16) a. [<sub>DP</sub> a [<sub>NP</sub> lúd [<sub>PP</sub> a leghosszabb nyak-kal]]]  
 the goose the longest neck-with  
 'the goose with the longest neck'  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> a [<sub>ModP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> leghosszabb nyak P<sub>0</sub>]<sub>i</sub> [[<sub>Mod</sub> -ú ] [<sub>NP</sub> lúd t<sub>i</sub> ]]]  
 'idem'

While Rubin (2002) is not concerned with what underlies the options in positioning modifiers with respect to what they modify, it provides a possible framework for L&M's (2004) AP-movement hypothesis, which we will adopt here.

As a final piece of data that L&M (2004) list but do not account for, observe (17), in which although both adjectives must be 'postposed', their order is not irrelevant.

- (17) a. everyone tall present  
 b. \*everyone present tall

Before our proposal is put forward, let us summarize the properties accrued so far. Qprons occur with APs if (i) the AP can be predicative, and (iia) on the opposite side with respect to the usual order in case of common nouns – with or without a linker, cf. (1), (10), or (iib) with linkers if on the usual side, cf. (13).<sup>1</sup>

### 3 Proposal

If the APs participating in the construction under investigation are predicative, suppose that all NPs containing such adjectival modifiers emerge from relative clause-like structures as small clause (SC) complements to an N head, which in effect is a functional category supplied with features only requiring an SC as its sister. The SC contains the minimal predication [<sub>SC</sub> NP – AP/VP/PP/NP], of which only AP is illustrated below. This structure draws heavily on Kayne’s (1994) and Vergnaud’s (1974) original suggestions, but differs from them in that the small clause is a complement of N, rather than of D, for obvious reasons of ordering restrictions and possible recursion of NP.

First then N is merged to SC:

- (18) a. [<sub>NP</sub> N [<sub>SC</sub> NP AP]]  
 b. [<sub>SC</sub> something/book interesting]

Next, the NP moves (à la Kayne and Vergnaud) recursively to Spec,NP providing for the relative clause structure and interpretation.

- (19) a. [<sub>NP</sub> NP<sub>i</sub> N [<sub>SC</sub> t<sub>i</sub> AP]]      b. [<sub>NP</sub> something/book<sub>i</sub> N [<sub>SC</sub> t<sub>i</sub> interesting]]

Now, following Rubin (2002) Mod is merged to NP, which is where linkers in Tagalog, Romanian, Chinese, and Hungarian are placed and which will in effect ‘make room’ for the surface position of prenominal attributive

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<sup>1</sup> The case of Basque, in which a linker occurs between the modifier and the Qpron (Jon Ortiz de Urbina, p.c.), is not illustrated for lack of space, and neither are Thai, which falls under (iib), cf. den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004), and Japanese, which has alternative Q – AN and AN – Q orders (Senga Toru, p.c.).

modifiers, whether APs, PPs, clauses, or other. Languages with strictly postnominal APs do not project the Mod layer.

(20)  $[_{\text{ModP}} \text{Mod} [_{\text{NP}} \text{NP}_i \text{N} [_{\text{SC } t_i} \text{AP}]]]$

Developing Rubin's suggestion further, the heads of the predicates in SC are marked for [+mod] in the languages in which the canonical order is AP/PP/... – NP. Then SC is fronted by remnant movement to Spec,ModP checking and deleting the uninterpretable feature [+mod] on Mod. SCs with predicates marked [-mod] stay put and end up as postnominal modifiers, as in (3b) or (4b).<sup>2</sup>

(21) a.  $[_{\text{ModP}} [_{\text{SC } t_i} \text{AP}]_j \text{Mod} [_{\text{NP}} \text{NP}_i [\text{N } [t_j]]]]$   
 b.  $[_{\text{ModP}} [_{\text{SC } t_i} \textit{interesting}]_j \text{Mod} [_{\text{NP}} \textit{something/book}_i [\text{N } [t_j]]]]$

Finally, Q is merged to ModP: this is another locus for linkers, as in French, Basque, and Thai, and provides ultimately for the 'visibility' of NP-internal quantifiers in the proposition of which the NP is a constituent of.

(22)  $[_{\text{QP}} \text{Q} [_{\text{ModP}} [_{\text{SC } t_i} \text{AP}]_j \text{Mod} [_{\text{NP}} \text{NP}_i [\text{N } t_j]]]]]$

If Q carries an uninterpretable feature [+q], it has to be checked and deleted by moving the NP containing the Qpron to Spec,QP. Unless the Qpron occupies this prominent position, it will not be visible for acquiring its scope over the proposition, ultimately blocking quantifier interpretation. We contend that Qprons must surface in positions inaccessible to common nouns because of the properties of scope relations in the language in question. NPs containing common nouns as their heads are of course marked [-q] and thus prevented from remnant movement.

(23) a.  $[_{\text{QP}} [_{\text{NP}} \text{NP}_i [\text{N } t_j]]_k \text{Q} [_{\text{ModP}} [_{\text{SC } t_i} \text{AP}]_j \text{Mod} [t_k]]]$   
 b.  $[_{\text{QP}} [_{\text{NP}} \textit{something}_i [\text{N } t_j]]_k \text{Q} [_{\text{ModP}} [_{\text{SC } t_i} \textit{interesting}]_j \text{Mod} [t_k]]]$

<sup>2</sup> Lack of space precludes the discussion of the regularity captured in (5a-b) or (6b-c), but nonpredicative and/or nonrestrictive prenominal APs must receive an account crucially different from that for predicative/restrictive ones. It may well be the case, for example, that strictly prenominal (nonpredicative, nonrestrictive) APs do without the Mod layer and the NP is a complement to the A head, as was suggested by Borer (1984). Note that we believe SC-movement to be compatible with subsequent N-movement to D as in Longobardi (1994) and others.

Note that in this approach Qprons are taken to be nouns and thus distinct from determiners (placed under D). Their complementary distribution is accounted for by claiming that once Q is projected, no D-layer becomes possible, because referential interpretation, carried by D, is incompatible with quantifier interpretation, carried by Q. Consequently, D cannot be merged to Q(P), but ModP or NP are possible options, and of course no preposing of the NP containing the common noun can take place.

- (24) a.  $[_{DP} D [_{ModP} [_{SC} t_i AP]_j Mod [_{NP} NP_i [N [t_j]]]]$   
 b.  $[_{DP} the [_{ModP} [_{SC} t_i interesting]_j Mod [_{NP} book_i [N [t_j]]]]$

#### 4 Consequences and further problems

The schematic proposal outlined in section 3 gives us adequate ground to accommodate the varieties in AP – Qpron structures surveyed above. To begin with the English examples not covered in section 3, since adjectives cooccurring with Qprons must originate in predication (i.e., relative clause) structures, only (3d), (4f), and (5c) can emerge. Neither will the nonrestrictive reading in (6c) and the incompatible meaning in (7d) be available. The same requirement accounts for the difference in (12c-d). As supposed above, ModP is not projected in case of postnominal APs, in other words, these adjectives carry a [-mod] feature, as in (3b, d), (4d, f), (5b, c) in English, and (13) in French. In these latter examples the SC stays in place, but the Qprons must move to Spec,QP to check [+q] on the Q head, as in (25), with Q spelled out as *de* in French.

- (25) a.  $[_{QP} NP_i Q [_{NP} t_i N [_{SC} t_i AP]]]$   
 b.  $[_{QP} rien_i de [_{NP} t_i N [_{SC} t_i extraordinaire]]]$

Finally, the order of postnominal adjectives, as in (17), can be accounted for by recursion of QP in the small clause in the following derivation.

- (26) a.  $[_{QP} Q [_{NP} N [_{SC} [_{QP} everyone_i Q [_{ModP} [_{SC} \dots tall]_j Mod [_{NP} t_i ]]]] ]$   
 $[_{AP} present]$   
 b.  $[_{QP} [_{QP} everyone_i Q [_{ModP} [_{SC} \dots tall]_j Mod [_{NP} t_i ]]]_k Q [_{NP} t_k N [_{SC} t_k$   
 $[_{AP} present]]]$



First *everyone tall* is generated in the subject of the SC by moving the adjective and then the quantifier in the lower cycle as reviewed above, and then this QP raises initially to form the relative construction, and then on the force of its [+q] feature to the matrix Spec,QP, while *present* remains in its original position. Although this appears to be a satisfactory analysis for the possible order, it does not explain why the opposite order is unacceptable with *tall* sitting in the higher predicate and Mod merged to the matrix NP.

As more and more data surface from a wide array of languages, such as Turkish and Japanese, more interesting problems related to Qpron – AP constructions emerge and call for a more comprehensive analysis. However, it seems that the crucial property of Qprons is their being quantifiers, which makes it necessary for them to be in a prominent position so that they could be visible for taking scope over the proposition they and the NPs containing them are constituents of.

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