

The Dual Source of the adjective-plus-indefinite-pronoun construction

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Recently, two proposals explaining the way adjectives combine with indefinite pronouns [=IPs] have been put forward based on contradicting evidence. Arguing against Abney (1987) and Kishimoto (2000), Larson & Marušič (2004) show that English adjectives combining with IPs, (1), are always postnominal and that the Abney/Kishimoto light N-raising analysis is not tenable. Roehrs (2006), on the other hand, convincingly shows that German (and Germanic) IPs take only prenominal adjectives and concludes, concerning one of Larson & Marušič's arguments, that these constructions involve adjectives that are prenominal to a null noun in a postnominal position (cf. Leu 2003 for a similar treatment of French cases). However, prenominal adjectives in postnominal positions still behave as prenominal As so that Roehrs's analysis cannot be used to explain the English facts presented in Larson & Marušič (2004).

- (1) *Something new* vs. *some new thing*
Someplace nice vs. *some nice place*
Everyone tall vs. *every tall one*

In this paper, we argue that the conflicting evidence showing that adjectives combining with IPs are both postnominal and prenominal in effect shows that languages employ (at least) two different constructions for combining IPs with adjectives. Some languages, as we will show for Slovenian, allow both constructions.

Unlike in the above-mentioned languages, where IPs like 'something' and 'someone' appear to behave in the same way, the Slovenian IP *nekaj* 'something' differs from the IP *nekdo* 'someone' in several ways. The first difference one can observe between the two types of IPs concerns the case of the adjectival complement. While *nekdo*, when nominative-marked, does not require any special case for its adjectival complement, *nekaj*, when nominative-marked, requires the adjective to be in the genitive, (2) (in non-nominative cases, the adjectival complement agrees with the IP in both types of IPs). Moreover, the pronoun *nekaj* is homophonous with the quantifier 'some', which also requires a complement in the genitive, e.g. *nekaj snega*_{GEN}/*snežink*_{GEN} 'some snow/snowflakes'. If one assumes that the two *nekaj*'s are the same element, then it is natural to posit a null N in its complement for the IP use in (2a). On the other hand, *nekdo* only has an IP use but no quantifier use (**nekdo ljudi* [intended 'some men']), offering no evidence for a null N in its complement in (2b).

- (2) a. *nekaj* *velikega* / **veliko* b. *nekdo* **velikega* / *velik*
something_{NOM} big_{GEN} big_{NOM} someone_{NOM} big_{GEN} big_{NOM}
'something big' 'someone tall'

Further, Slovenian has an alternation comparable to German where the relative order of the adjective and its complement differs between prenominal and postnominal position, (3)-(4). When the whole AP (in bold) is prenominal, the adjective (*sloneč*) follows its complement (*na mizo*), (3), when it is postnominal, the adjective precedes its complement, (4).

- (3) a. ***na mizo sloneč*** *fant* (4) a. **fant* ***na mizo sloneč***
on table leaning boy boy on table leaning
'a boy leaning against the table'
b. **sloneč* ***na mizo*** *fant* b. *fant* ***sloneč*** ***na mizo***
leaning on table boy boy leaning on table
'a boy leaning against the table'

The relative order of the adjective and its complement can thus be used as a diagnostic to determine the pre- vs. postnominal status of the adjective phrase as a whole. As shown in (5) and (6), the test yields conflicting results when applied to the two kinds of Slovenian IPs. *Nekaj* allows both orders, (5), while *nekdo* allows only the postnominal order (on neutral intonation), (6) (like in English, APs cannot appear in front of any of the two IPs). This suggests that the whole AP combining with *nekdo*, but not with *nekaj*, is postnominal, and that

a null N approach (Roehrs 2006, Leu 2003) could work only for one but not for the other.

- (5) a. *nekaj na mizo slonečga* (6) a. **nekdo na mizo sloneč*
something on table leaning someone on table leaning
‘something leaning against the table’
- b. ?*nekaj slonečga na mizo* b. *nekdo sloneč na mizo*
something leaning on table someone leaning on table
‘someone leaning against the table’

A further difference manifests itself with superlatives. While *nekaj* allows superlatives in their complement, *nekdo* doesn’t, (7). If superlatives are always prenominal (Matushansky 2004), this again suggests that adjectives combining with *nekdo*, but not with *nekaj*, are always postnominal. The only way to get a superlative as the complement of *nekdo*-type IPs is inside a PP in a construction parallel to the English *someone from among the best ones*, (8).

- (7) *Tole je pa nekaj najboljšega / *nekdo najboljši.*
this is PTCL something the best someone the best
‘This is a great thing.’ (#‘This is a great guy.’)
- (8) *Tole je pa nekdo od najboljših.*
this is PTCL someone from best
‘This is someone from among the best ones.’

Finally, *nekaj* and *nekdo* also behave differently with respect to relativization. With *nekdo*, one can only form an ordinary relative clause with the complementizer used with ordinary relativization, while with *nekaj*, relativization is only possible with the complementizer/*wh*-word used in free relatives, (9).

- (9) a. *Videli smo nekaj, kar / *ki je padlo s hruške.*
saw aux something what that aux fell from pear-tree
‘We saw something that had fallen from a pear tree.’
- b. *Videli smo nekoga, *kdor/*kar / ki je padel s hruške.*
saw aux someone who what that aux fell from pear-tree
‘We saw someone that had fallen from a pear tree.’

If we assume that an ordinary relative clause needs a nominal head, something that raises out of it, then (9b) suggests that *nekoga* is indeed a noun. Free relatives, on the other hand, do not combine with a noun but rather with a DP (cf. Groos & van Riemsdijk 1981, Hirschbühler & Rivero 1981, 1983), and so (9a) actually suggests that the relativization occurs at the higher DP level. (An obvious question to be answered, if *nekaj* also has a null N, is why it cannot also participate in the ordinary relativization.)

In sum, Slovenian IPs *nekaj* ‘something’ and *nekdo* ‘someone’ behave differently in several respects. Like German IPs, *nekaj* combines with an adjective that behaves as if it is prenominal, and like English IPs, *nekdo* combines with an adjective that behaves as if it is postnominal. We account for this split by proposing two mechanisms with which Slovenian adjectives combine with IPs, thereby making sense of the opposing claims advanced in the literature in the debate about the structure of IPs.

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