On the Determiner Phrase analysis of Polish nominals

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The aim of this talk is to analyse the syntax of Polish nominal expressions in terms of what is known as the DP hypothesis (cf., Abney 1987). The fact that articles occupy the D position crosslinguistically is widely accepted. But many linguists have raised the question whether it is reasonable to assume the DP hypothesis for languages which do not have lexical articles. Polish is an articleless language. I will argue that what appears to be a bare NP in Polish is actually headed by the D node. Furthermore, I will show that, apart from the DP layer, Polish nouns project other functional phrases – situated in the region between NP and DP. The evidence for the above claims will be based on certain DP-internal word order facts. I will account for them by postulating that, in the absence of lexical articles, other elements may move to the functional projections above NP and lexicalise them in overt syntax.

In Polish, attributive adjectives generally precede nouns (including proper names). However, when adjectives such as sam (lit. ‘alone’) appear with personal pronouns, they are admitted only to the right of the pronominal head:

(1a) *[Sam Chomsky] czytał mój artykuł.
alone Chomsky read my article
‘Chomsky himself read my article.’
(1b) *[On sam] czytał mój artykuł.
he alone read my article
‘he himself read my article’

The same pattern can be noticed in nominal expressions containing quantifiers such as wszyscy ‘all’ (examples 2a-b), cardinal numerals (3a-b) or the indefinite pronoun coś ‘something’ (4a-b):

(2a) *[wszyscy lingwicī] czytali mój artykuł
all linguists read my article
‘all linguists read my article’
(2b) *[wy wszyscy] czytaliście mój artykuł
you all read my article
‘all of you read my article’
(3a) *[siedmiu policjantów] czytało ten artykuł
seven policemen read this article
‘seven policemen read this article’
Following the analysis of Serbian proposed by Progovac (1998), I will argue that the DP hypothesis provides an elegant explanation for the above cases of asymmetry. Many researches (cf. Cardinaletti 1993) argue that, universally, personal pronouns move from their underlying position in N to D. Modifiers such as *sam* ‘alone’ or *wszyści* ‘all’ in the above examples agree with the following noun in case, number and gender. I will assume that they are specifiers in functional phrases projected above the nominal head. Thus, it could be claimed that the order in (1b, 2b, 3b and 4b) follows from raising the pronoun from N to D, crossing the modifier, which occupies a fixed syntactic position. This means that Polish projects the DP layer. The movement is illustrated in (5).

(5)  
\[
\text{DP pronoun}[\text{FP modifier}][\text{NP t}]
\]

However, the above analysis seems to be questioned by examples such as the following:

(6)  
Chomsky *sam* czytał mój artykuł.
Chomsky alone read my article
‘Chomsky read my article himself.’

In (6), the element *sam* seems to be admitted to the right of the head noun. This should not be allowed if we assume that the noun, unlike the personal pronoun in (1b), cannot be raised to D. I will argue that, in this case, the element *sam* is not part of the DP (in surface syntax). Instead, it belongs to the verbal complex – similarly to adverbs. König and Siemund (1999) show that, crosslinguistically, intensifiers such as *selbst* in German, *x-self* in English or *x-même* in French seem to have at least two uses: an adnominal one and an adverbial one. The uses are illustrated in (7) and (8), respectively:

(7)  
*I would like to talk to the President himself.*

(8)  
*The President wrote that speech himself.*

However, the word *sam* manifests adjectival behaviour and exhibits case, gender and number agreement with the subject noun independently of its position inside the verbal complex:

(9a)  
[Moja żona] *sama* będzie jutro reperować ten samochód.
my wife alone-FEM will tomorrow repair this car

(9b)  
[Moja żona] *będzie sama* jutro reperować ten samochód.
my wife will alone-FEM tomorrow repair this car
The pattern presented above seems intriguingly similar to the one exhibited in many languages by the so-called floating quantifiers. Similarly to Sportiche’s (1988) analysis of the phenomenon of quantifier-float, I will account for the data in (9) by arguing that the element sam is always base-generated in the DP-initial position. As the subject DP moves up from its VP-internal base position, sam can be stranded in any position adjacent to the trace of the subject. If it is stranded inside the verbal part of the sentence its interpretation becomes adverbial. On the other hand, if sam rises to the Spec IP position (together with the subject DP), only the adnominal interpretation (corresponding to the one in (1a)) becomes possible.

Another phenomenon that blurs the otherwise clear asymmetry pattern presented in (1-4) is illustrated below:

(10) Policjanci nie rozumiej gramatyki generatywnej.  
‘Policemen don’t understand generative grammar.’

Examples such as (10) show that adjectives which do not simply describe the noun, but rather classify it with respect to a certain category, tend to appear in postposition. I will account for this word-order fact by assuming that, in such constructions, the noun is raised to the head of a functional phrase located in between NP and DP:

(11) [DP [FP1 noun]][FP2 classifying modifier][NP t]

I will also show that this type of overt N-movement driven by the classifying interpretation of the nominal expression is attested cross-linguistically.

REFERENCES