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On determiners in Croatian from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar

In most of the existing grammars of the Croatian language words are directly analyzed into clauses (or sentences), and therefore the sentence is taken as the main syntactic unit. Consequently, these grammars, with rare exceptions (for example, Silić and Pranjković 2007; Belaj and Tanacković Faletar 2014), almost completely ignore the syntax of groups (phrases) and their parts, as well as the syntax of clauses and the syntax of discourse. Also, the lack of description based on a particular theoretical approach results in the mixing of grammatical levels and inconsistent terminology. Based on the study of various contemporary approaches to the interpretation of nominal groups, we support the view that the term ‘attribute’ has been inadequately used in more traditional approaches to Croatian grammar, and emphasize the need to distinguish modifiers from determiners. Furthermore, this paper tries to provide a simple model of description of nominal groups, with particular reference to the concept of determiner, within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Fawcett 2010) as an approach that sees language as a social category and analyzes its use in actual communication.

Key words: determiner; modifier (attribute); nominal group; Systemic Functional Grammar.

1. Introduction

In Western grammatical tradition the phrase or group was not recognized as a distinct structural unit but words were directly analyzed into clauses or sentences. Hal-



Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 310) point out that “describing a sentence as a construction of words is rather like describing a house as a construction of bricks, without recognizing the walls and the rooms as intermediate structural units”. Hence, such a description can only account for simple sentences such as (1a) and (1b), but it cannot account for increasingly complex nominal groups as (1c).¹

- (1) a. *Ivan vozi auto.*
‘Ivan drives/is driving a car.’
- b. *Dijete plače.*
‘A child is crying.’
- c. ... *najnovije mjere Hrvatske narodne banke kojima se ograničava rast kreditnih plasmana banaka* (HNK vj20030226go04)
‘... the latest measures of the Croatian National Bank which restrict the growth of the banks’ credit placements’

The head of the nominal group in (1c) is the noun *mjere* ‘measures’, which is pre-modified by the modifier *najnovije* ‘latest’, and postmodified by the nominal group *Hrvatske narodne banke* ‘Croatian National Bank’ and the relative clause *kojima se ograničava rast kreditnih plasmana banaka* ‘which restrict the growth of bank’s credit placements’. As can be seen from this example, which was extracted from the Croatian National Corpus, real-life discourse is very complex and in order to be able to account for such complexity, we have adopted the theoretical approach of Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Fawcett 2010) as it sees language as a social category and analyzes its use in real communication.

The Western grammatical tradition is still widely followed in Croatian grammars in which the sentence is taken as the main syntactic unit. Consequently, these grammars, with rare exceptions (for example, Silić and Pranjkić 2007; Belaj and Tanacković Faletar 2014), almost completely ignore the syntax of groups and their parts, the syntax of clauses and the syntax of discourse. Also, the lack of description based on a particular theoretical approach results in mixing grammatical levels and inconsistent terminology.

Therefore, this paper tries to provide a simple model of description of nominal groups, with particular reference to the concept of determiner, which has often been the subject of linguistic debate.

¹ Although the term noun phrase is widely used in linguistics, in this paper we use the term nominal group, as proposed by Halliday (1985).



2. The structure of the nominal group

The simplest representation of the structure of a nominal group sees it as consisting of the head as the obligatory part, and of modifiers and determiners, which show marked difference – the former provide additional information about the head while the latter define it. Both modifiers (or attributes, as they are usually called in Croatian grammars) and determiners have been a debatable issue for Croatian, mostly due to a lack of a specific theoretical framework, i.e. consistent criteria that would be applied in their interpretation. Before we devote more attention to the issue of determiners, which are at the center of our interest, we briefly outline the problem of modifier (attribute) that could itself deserve a separate paper.

2.1 *Modifier (Attribute)*

In Croatian descriptions of complex nominals, head nouns are said to be further modified by attributes and appositions, while the actual term modifier is generally used to refer to modal particles on the sentence level, or to adverbs which stand next to some other attribute. Apposition is not dealt with in this paper, as it entails two nominal groups (i.e. two separate heads which are coordinated) whereas in modification there is a dependency relation between the head and its modifier.

The term attribute is very broadly used, not clearly defined and often refers not only to elements that in Anglophone linguistic tradition are called modifiers, but also to determiners.

Pavešić (1971: 427) thus defines the attribute as the element which expresses a particular property or a relation, thus restricting the words to which it is attributed, while Težak and Babić (1994: 208) define it as the word which is added as a designation to a noun, nominal pronoun or nominal adjective.

According to Silić and Pranjković (2007: 309), the attribute is a dependent, secondary element of the sentence structure, which can be obligatory when: (i) the noun (head) cannot constitute the nominal group alone (without a modifier), (e.g. *Javit ću se idućega tjedna* ‘I’ll contact you next week’ vs. **Javit ću se tjedna* ‘*I’ll contact you week’), (ii) it is semantically determined (*S njim treba razgovarati na drugi način* ‘One should talk to him in a different way’- **S njim treba razgovarati na način* ‘*One should talk to him in (a) way’).

Silić and Pranjković (2007: 310–311) further distinguish between congruent and non-congruent attributes. The function of the former can be performed by an adjective (*Susjedova kuća nije prodana* ‘The neighbour’s house was not sold’), adject-



tive pronoun (*Ova kuća još nije prodana* ‘**This** house has not been sold yet’) or ordinal number (*Prvi susjed prodaje kuću* ‘The **first** neighbour is selling a house/The neighbor next door is selling a house’), which all agree with the head of the nominal group in case, number and gender. Non-congruent attributes, on the other hand, do not show agreement with their heads and would correspond to postmodifiers. This function is performed by nouns or nominal groups (*izvještaj glavnoga tajnika* ‘the report of **the secretary general**’), prepositional phrases (*vjera u uspjeh* ‘belief **in success**’), or adverbs (*Malo dalje je skretanje nadesno* ‘A bit farther there is a turning **to the right**’). Within congruent attributes, Silić and Pranjković (2007: 310) distinguish the following types: (i) qualitative attribute (*Kupila je šarenu haljinu* ‘She bought a **colourful** dress’), (ii) quantitative attribute (*Susjed je prodao dvije kuće* ‘The neighbor has sold **two** houses’), (iii) possessive attribute (*To su naši problemi* ‘Those are **our** problems’) and (iv) relative attribute (*Svako se jutro rano budimo* ‘We get up early **every** morning’).

As already mentioned and as can be seen from the examples above, the term attribute is too broadly used in Croatian – for referential as well as non-referential elements that either precede or follow the head noun. It therefore seems best that the term attribute, if kept, should only be considered as an ‘umbrella’ term for modifiers and determiners, which most certainly have to be distinguished.

2.2 Determiner

Silić (1992–1993) was among the first to use the term *determinator* ‘determiner’ in discussions and descriptions of Croatian. Frleta, T. and Frleta, Z. (2007: 35) suggest the term *determinant*, as it reflects Saussure’s dichotomy and terminology (*signifiant/signifié; déterminant/déterminé*). However, we consider the term determiner to be more appropriate and use it in this paper, but we also introduce a distinction in terminology and that is one of form and function. Hence, all lexical categories which can assume the function of determiner are referred to as *determinatives*, and their functional category is that of *determiner* (cf. Quirk et al. 1985, and Huddleston, Pullum et al. 2002).

Ivić (1983), Radovanović (1990) and Silić (1992–1993) use the term *determiner* to designate any lexical category that determines the noun. Speaking from a generative point of view Caruso (2012: 126) says that “since they do not distinguish between elements that function either as specifiers or modifiers, their definition of determiners also includes adjectives as well as the number *one* in its function as indefinite article”. Silić (1992–1993) thus distinguishes between relative determiners



(*jedan* ‘one’, *svaki* ‘every/each’...)², demonstrative determiners (*takav* ‘such’, *taj* ‘that’...), possessive determiners (*njegov* ‘his’, *bratov* ‘brother’s’...), differential determiners (*nov* ‘new’...), and qualifying determiners (*lijep* ‘pretty’...), while Caruso (2012) herself includes the following units into the category of determiners: demonstrative pronouns (*ova/ta djevojka* ‘**this/that** girl’), definite and indefinite pronouns (*neke djevojke* ‘**some** girls’), *jedan* ‘one’ in the function of indefinite article, possessive adjectives and pronouns (*studentova/moja knjiga* ‘**student’s/my** book’), quantifiers and numerals (*svi studenti* ‘**all** students’, *pet studenata* ‘**five** students’). It is quite evident that Caruso basically includes the same categories as Silić, save for differential and qualifying determiners, which actually refer to modifying elements, i.e. those that do not establish reference.

Katičić (1991) interprets the determiner in the light of its functions and states two functions: (i) the function of attribute which determines the noun it stands next to, or has anaphoric reference (e.g. *Takav junak pa se u rupu skriva!* ‘Such a hero to be hiding in a hole!’); and (ii) the function of a superordinate correlator which uses relative connectors with cataphoric reference (introduces the subordinate clause) (e.g. *Ta donio si mi takav komadić mesa, koji bi pod nokat stao* ‘You brought me such a piece of meat that would fit under a fingernail’). Saying that a determiner has the function of attribute which determines the noun sounds rather paradoxical. *Takav* ‘such’ is not obligatory in the latter example (it can actually be omitted without any change in meaning), and it does not have determinative, i.e. referential meaning in either of the two examples. In fact, it is a qualifying adjective in both examples.

Kordić (1992: 27) interprets the determiner as a non-obligatory part of nominal group which determines the reference by means of grammatical rather than lexical units. According to her, attributes (i.e. modifiers), unlike determiners, are components with lexical meaning whose function is that of modification. The determiner is a functional category that comprises two classes: adjective pronouns, i.e. demonstrative pronouns, possessive pronouns, indefinite pronouns and interrogative pronouns (except *tko* ‘who’, *što* ‘what’ (cf. Težak and Babić 1994)), and articles³. A major step forward in such an approach was establishing determiners as a predominantly functional category and separating them from modifiers, which mainly carry

² Silić uses the term *aktualizator* ‘actualizer’ for *jedan* ‘one’ with the function of indefinite article because it neither quantifies nor qualifies the referent but actualizes it (Silić 1992–1993: 409).

³ Since Croatian is an articleless language and has no definite article (cf. Ivić 1983), we think that *jedan* ‘one’ should not be considered an indefinite article, but a functional category which in some languages is filled by articles.



lexical meaning. Kordić (1992) also argues that determiners are not obligatory because they do not perform an immediate (direct) function in the sentence structure, such as the one of e.g. subject or object. Such an interpretation is in line with Croatian grammars of the 90-ties, which emphasized the clause (sentence) as the main syntactic unit and ignored the syntax of phrases/groups. If one were to follow this reasoning, one could say that the nominal group is not an obligatory part of a prepositional phrase as it does not carry any sentence function, and still, a preposition alone cannot constitute a prepositional phrase.

In an attempt to give a unified account of various approaches to the issue of determiners, Vukojević (1995) states that different interpretations of determiners can be subsumed under two main approaches: (i) the minimalist approach⁴, as adopted by Kordić (1992), and Mrazović and Vukadinović (1990), according to whom the category of determiners consists of articles and adjective pronouns, and (ii) the maximalist approach, as proposed by Klajn (1985), and Silić (1992–1993). It should be noted, however, that Mrazović and Vukadinović (1990) consider determiners to be a lexical category with attributive function, while Kordić (1992) thinks of them as a functional category, which may involve different lexical categories with the same function and distribution. Klajn (1985), on the other hand, includes in the category of determiners adjective pronouns, adjectives, participles, articles, numerals and other quantifiers, as well as words which stand half-way between adjectives and pronouns (such as *isti* ‘same’), while Silić (1992–1993) considers as determiners all units which assume the position of a specifier within a nominal group. As an alternative to these approaches, Vukojević (1995: 227) proposes that a determiner is every prenominal element, with the exception of qualifying adjectives. In this very broad interpretation he distinguishes between nominal determiners,⁵ adverbial determiners, and adjectival determiners, which have the function of a specifier within a nominal group as they carry agreement features. However, we find the category of adverbial determiners here to be highly questionable since Vukojević tends to place in it not only (intensifying) adverbs, which can modify adjectives and other adverbs (*jako velik* ‘very big’, **jako čovjek* ‘very man’), but also indefinite absolute quantifiers, which can modify nouns but not adjectives or universal and relative quantifiers (*puno knjiga* ‘a lot of books’, **puno smiješan* ‘a lot of funny’, **svih puno knjiga* ‘all lot of books’).

⁴ The term ‘minimalist’ here does not refer to the Minimalist generative approach, but to the number of categories considered as determiners.

⁵ Some of these can function as heads of a nominal group!



Belaj and Kuna (2013), on the other hand, find Kordić's (1992) interpretation plausible from the standpoint of cognitive grammar, because it does not separate lexis from grammar but rather sees them as a continuum. In this respect, determiners may be seen as referential devices that are not exclusively grammatical in nature but have some categories that may be placed on the scale between modifiers and determiners, showing features of both, i.e. exhibiting both lexical and grammatical features. In other words, there may be some intermediate categories on the way from modifiers to determiners, which show both lexical and grammatical features. Belaj and Kuna (2013) see possessive adjectives as one such category: they carry lexical features because they belong to the lexical category of adjectives and are derived from nouns, but at the same time they show distinct determiner features, namely they have (external) referential function, and reference⁶ is one of the key characteristics of all grammatical constituents of complex nominals. Modifiers and determiners therefore make a continuum on the scale of referentiality ranging from non-referential (i.e. modifying) elements, where they place adjectival premodifiers and definite absolute quantifiers (numerals),⁷ across intermediate elements such as possessive adjectives to referential (i.e. determining) elements, where they place determiners – possessive and demonstrative pronouns, some indefinite adjectival pronouns, pronominal demonstrative adjectives and *jedan* 'one' and *neki* 'some' with the function of indefinite article – as well as relative quantifiers (universal and partial) and indefinite absolute quantifiers. We also find plausible the idea that referentiality is a scale and that many categories may take modifier or determiner function depending on whether they are referential or non-referential. We feel that context is crucial in this respect – modifier or determiner function of an element in a complex nominal often has to be determined in relation to the surrounding linguistic and/or situational context, not just the sentence in which it is found.

In order to present a somewhat different concept of determiners in Croatian, which clearly distinguishes them from modifiers, we present the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Fawcett 2010). The main ideas of this theoretical approach and its interpretation of nominal groups are discussed in the following section.

⁶ A common term in cognitive grammar for reference is grounding (cf. Taylor 2002: 346).

⁷ Numerals are seen by Belaj and Kuna (2013) as the first transitory element towards referential elements but are not considered to be determiners because they are usually non-specific, i.e. to put it plainly, they mostly give the quantity that is referential with an implicit zero quantifier such as 'any' and not with a specific set (cf. Belaj and Kuna 2013: 327-330). In other words, saying Let us call another three people would mean 'any three' out of a set of people, not specific three.



3. Nominal group within Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG, Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Fawcett 2010) differs from other functional grammars in that it tries to establish a theory of language as part of the social process, and offer analytical methodology that enables a detailed and systematic description of language patterns.

The concept of rank is very important in the theory, and language analysis starts from the sentence (top down). The sentence consists of groups/phrases which consist of words that are made of morphemes, etc. Functions at one rank are realized through functions from the lower rank.

Language is functionally organized and the three functional components of meaning (i.e. metafunctions - ideational, textual and interpersonal) produce language structures. Hence, the structure of the clause is derived from these functions and the same can be said about the structure of a group, the only difference being that the ideational component of a group is split into two – experiential and logical. Within a grammar of the group, each of these components is “a partial contribution to a single structural line” (Halliday 1985: 180).

The ideational metafunction transmits semantic content giving information about our experience of the world. The logical subcomponent is used to express general and logical relations, thus defining complex units. The group is similar to a word complex as it represents a combination of words which are connected based on particular logical relation. The logical structure of the nominal group describes the relationship between the head and its modifiers, and can be illustrated as follows:

PREMODIFIER(S) + HEAD + POSTMODIFIER(S)

(2)

<i>te</i>	<i>zadnje</i>	<i>tri</i>	<i>visoke</i>	<i>kamene</i>	<i>kuće</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>moru</i>
PRM					H	POM	
←				→			
ε	δ	γ	β	α	β		

‘those last three high stone houses at sea’



The experiential subcomponent of this nominal group is expressed by the following functional elements: *Deictic* (D), *Numerative* (N), *Epithet* (E), *Classifier* (C), *Thing* (T), and *Qualifier* (Q).

(3)

D	N		E	C	T	Q	
<i>te</i>	<i>zadnje</i>	<i>tri</i>	<i>visoke</i>	<i>kamene</i>	<i>kuće</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>moru</i>

The Deictic function refers to determiners.⁸ Preisler (1997: 138) puts in this category articles, demonstratives, wh-words (*which, what, whose*), the genitive or possessive, and quantifiers such as *any/no/some, a little/a few, each/every, either/neither*, etc. Numeratives, Epithets and Classifiers would correspond to premodifiers, while Qualifiers are postmodifiers. The head is called the Thing.

Unlike the experiential structure which is multivariate, i.e. each unit has a different function within a nominal group (each component contributes to the meaning of the nominal group), the logical structure is univariate, i.e. the relationship of head and premodifier is equal to that of head and postmodifier. The nominal group is specific as it entails both these structures, which describes how simple units form into a very complex nominal group.

SFG, like other functional theories, emphasizes the choices that speakers make and in that sense every utterance presents a number of choices. The same can be said of a nominal group. By adding modifiers to the head of the nominal group it is expanded. The nominal group behaves in a similar way to a clause as there is progression from the element with greatest specifying potential to elements that have a lower identifying potential and they become more permanent attributes if they are closer to the head, or as Halliday (1985: 187) points out, “the more permanent the attribute of a thing, the less likely it is to identify it in a particular context”. The most permanent item in this respect is the head itself. Temporary quantitative characterization of Thing is achieved through numerative, quality is expressed by epithets whereas classifiers express a more permanent quality of Thing. That is why *nova bijela košulja* ‘new white shirt’ is more acceptable than *bijela nova košulja* ‘white new shirt’⁹ – the newness will disappear sooner than the whiteness.

⁸ Some authors (eg. Teich 1999) state that Deictic includes determiners, demonstratives and possessives, thinking evidently of determiners in a more narrow sense.

⁹ It should be noted that the latter example, in which the classifier precedes the epithet, is not ungrammatical in Croatian but it moves away from the neutral (unmarked) sequence of modifiers. For



Textual meaning is incorporated in the entire structure of the nominal as it determines the order in which the components appear as well as the information structure of the group – just as the sentence starts with the theme, thus marking the beginning of the message, the nominal group starts with the deictic element.

The textual metafunction of the nominal group is that of determination (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen 1997). The deictic element in its textual metafunction enables the presentation of ideational and interpersonal meaning. For instance, in the nominal group *ta moja drvena kuća* ‘lit. ***that** my wooden house’ (‘**that** wooden house of mine’) the deictic element opens up the possibility of sharing further information about the referent. In the same way, the deictic *jedan* ‘a’ in the nominal group *jedan mladi britanski pisac* ‘a young British writer’ enables the introduction of further elements that serve to classify (i.e. modify) the head.

Interpersonal meanings can, among other units, be expressed by epithets that carry the speaker’s attitude (e.g. *old rags*, *crowded streets*) or perception of a referent (e.g. *moćan* ‘mighty’, *fantastičan* ‘fantastic’). These should not be confused with experiential epithets that show an objective quality of the referent (e.g. *kratak* ‘short’, *plav* ‘blue’). The quality *dugačak* ‘long’, as in (4a), is an objective quality that enables us to identify the referent (*vlak* ‘train’), whereas the referent *odmor* ‘vacation’ in (4b) cannot be distinguished from other vacations that are less ‘fantastic’.

- (4) a. *Vidjela je dugačak vlak.*
‘She saw a **long train**.’
- b. *Proveli smo fantastičan odmor.*
‘We’ve had a **fantastic vacation**.’

4. Determiner as an obligatory component of the nominal group

In Croatian grammars determiners were not considered as a separate and obligatory unit of a nominal group, but were traditionally placed in the category of adjectives or pronouns with modifying (i.e. attributive) function (cf. Katičić 1991; Težak and Babić 1994; Barić et al. 2003). However, we believe that these two categories should be separated due to the marked difference they exhibit in specifying/determining the entire group or simply describing or adding additional information to the head of the nominal group. Whereas attributes (5a) are descriptive, i. e. non-

a detailed discussion of the influence of non-neutral constituent order on the grammaticality of complex nominals see Belaj and Kuna (2013).



referential, determiners (5b) are referential as they allow us to single out a referent and identify it, and therefore should be considered as obligatory elements.

- (5) a. *U izlogu je stajala **crvena torba**.*
 ‘There was a **red bag** in the store window’
- b. *Sviđa mi se **ta torba**.*
 ‘I like **that bag**’

It should be noted that even elements which are considered to be determiners *par excellence*, e.g. demonstrative pronouns, do not always have determiner function. In (6) the demonstrative cannot be said to have referential function¹⁰ if there are no other books around and the referent is clear and already identified; it may merely be used for emphasis:

- (6) *Dodaj mi više **tu knjigu**!*
 ‘Would you pass me **that book** already!’

On the other hand, if we replaced the demonstrative in (5b) with the adjective *crven* ‘red’ (*Sviđa mi se crvena torba*. ‘I like the red bag’), we could not say that this modifier had no referential function whatsoever, because it clearly serves to single out this bag from all the others. The use of the definite article in English here is quite indicative of the fact that referentiality is closely connected to determinacy.

We believe that determiners carry some key features that make them referential in a particular context, and allow them to be distinguished from modifiers. These are: definite/indefinite, demonstrative, possessive, and quantitative. Even though units that can assume the function of determiner vary from one language to another, it would be reasonable to suppose that the features that determiners carry are universal.

Languages without articles may express definiteness by case (*Donesi mi vode/vodu* ‘Bring me water-GEN (indef.)/water-ACC (def.)’) or the absence of a determiner. Definiteness/indefiniteness in Croatian can also be expressed by using a definite or an indefinite form of an adjective (e.g. *velik kamen/veliki kamen* ‘the big stone/a big stone’). Indefiniteness is expressed by the numeral *jedan* ‘one’ or the indefinite *neki* ‘some’ in the function of an indefinite article, and by pronouns. The indefinite marker *jedan*, may, according to Caruso (2012: 293–294), also be used with plural nouns (*Na redu su još **jedni** savjeti za vašu kosu*. ‘There still

¹⁰ Or at least such referential function that would single out the referent from a set of other possible referents. We believe this difference in the degree of referentiality can be nicely indicated in English by the use of the definite article instead of the demonstrative pronoun in examples such as (6).



follows some advice (pl.) concerning your hair.’, *Poklonio sam stare novine jednim ženama*. ‘I gave the old newspapers to some women.’). Furthermore, the following examples in (7) demonstrate how determiners may carry a different degree of referentiality:

- (7) a. *Ispričaj nam koju svoju priču.*
lit. ‘Tell us **some your** story.’ = ‘Tell us one of your stories.’
- b. *Ispričaj nam svoju koju priču.*
lit. ‘Tell us **your some** story.’ = ‘Tell us a story of yours.’
- c. *Ispričaj nam koju priču.*
‘Tell us **a** story.’
- d. *Ispričaj nam svoju priču.*
‘Tell us **your** story.’

The word order in (7a) – with the determiner expressing indefiniteness preceding the one expressing possession – would be the unmarked, prototypical word order, as opposed to (7b), which is still possible but less typical, and actually emphasizes whose story we want to hear.¹¹ The indefinite marker *koji* ‘some, a’ signals that it is any story out of several in all three examples (7a-c). In (7d) however, the determiner *svoj* ‘your’ marks possession and it would be a matter of debate whether it also serves as a marker of definiteness, narrowing down the number of stories to a specific one, or is definiteness signaled by the absence of a marker.¹² We might therefore argue that the possessive is more referential than the indefinite marker, which is why it tends to appear closer to the noun, as in (7a).

Evidently, the relationship between referentiality and (in)definiteness is a very complex one and exceeds the scope of the present paper, but it most certainly merits further investigation.

As for pronouns, Silić and Pranjković (2007) distinguish between interrogative and indefinite pronouns, but they consider the sentences *Ako te netko pita, reci...* ‘If someone asks you, say...’ and *Ako nečiji automobil ima...* ‘If someone’s car has...’ to be identical, although it is obvious that only *netko* ‘someone’ in the former ex-

¹¹ As opposed to Croatian, English does not allow possessive determiners to stand in front of the noun together with the (in)definite article (**a your story*) and would require the possessive to be postposed and in the form of the *of*-genitive (*a story of yours*).

¹² This is very often the case in Croatian, but the absence of a marker may sometimes signal indefiniteness as well, depending on the context. Thus the sentence *Kupila sam knjigu.* may be interpreted as both ‘I bought a book.’ and ‘I bought the book.’



ample has ‘true’ pronominal function (i.e. it is the head of the nominal group), whereas *nečiji* ‘someone’s’ determines the head noun *automobil* ‘car’. The same can be said about the sentences *Čiji auto Ivan vozi?* ‘Whose car is Ivan driving?’ and *Čiji je onaj auto?* ‘Whose is that car?’ where *čiji auto* ‘whose car’ can be considered as definiteness in a broad sense.

Possession is expressed by possessive pronouns (*moj auto* ‘my car’) and possessive adjectives (*bratov auto* ‘brother’s car’), which, since they express the same feature – possession – and have identical distribution, can never appear together in pre-head position and refer to the same head noun (**njegov sinov auto* ‘*his son’s car’ = the car is both his and son’s). This order is possible in English, but only if the possessive pronoun refers to the genitive, not to the head noun (*his son’s car* = the car belonging to his son). The Saxon genitive may have modifier function in English as well, in which case the determiner in front refers to the head noun, not to the genitive (*my ladies’ bag*) (cf. Greenbaum and Quirk 1990). In Croatian the possessive adjective prototypically follows the head noun if it has a determiner as part of the adjectival group (*auto moga brata* ‘lit. *car of my brother’, ‘my brother’s car’)¹³ so it appears that determiners may not only precede but also follow the head noun.

Demonstrative meaning is expressed by demonstrative pronouns (*ovaj auto* ‘this car’), while quantity is expressed by universal and other quantifiers such as *svi* ‘all’, *svaki* ‘each/every’, *pola* ‘half’, *mnogo* ‘a lot (of)’, etc. Croatian grammars usually describe these as qualifying adjectives, while in traditional English grammars (cf. Quirk et al. 1985) they are labelled pre-determiners (e.g. *many, few, less, half, all, both*, etc.) because they precede the s.c. central determiners – articles, demonstratives, possessives, wh-words and quantifiers like *each, every, either, neither*, etc.

Based on these features, we think that the following categories, which in SFG are subsumed under a common term ‘determinatives’, can function as determiners in Croatian: indefinite determinatives (*neki kaput* ‘some coat’, *jedan kaput* ‘a/one coat’), demonstrative determinatives (*taj kaput* ‘that coat’), possessive determinatives (*moj kaput* ‘my coat’, *bratov kaput* ‘brother’s coat’), interrogative determinatives (*čiji kaput* ‘whose coat’), indefinite absolute quantifiers (*mnogo* ‘many’, *nekoliko* ‘few’, etc.) and relative quantifiers – universal (*svi* ‘all’, *svaki* ‘every/each’, etc.) and partial (*većina* ‘most’, *nijedan* ‘neither, no’, etc.).

¹³ A grammatically possible structure for Croatian would also be the one with the adjectival group in front of the head noun (*moga brata auto* ‘my brother’s car’), however this word order is very stylistically marked and rarely used (it belongs to somewhat archaic, literary style).

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper, we have attempted to describe the nominal group in Croatian within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar, with special emphasis on the concept of determiner. We have concluded that the determiner is an obligatory part of the nominal group that is essential for interpretation and which should be distinguished from modifiers, as it restricts the reference of the head of a nominal group. Determiners are therefore referential, whereas modifiers are descriptive or non-referential. We concur with the view that referentiality may be seen as a scale, which in SFG is represented by a continuum of elements that range from those with the greatest specifying potential to those with the lowest identifying potential.

We also believe that the determiner (or Deictic) function exhibits some key features that allow determiners to be distinguished from modifiers. These features are: definite/indefinite, demonstrative, possessive, and quantitative. The units which may assume the function of determiners may differ from one language to another but it is reasonable to expect that the features they express are universal. Whether or not an element is considered to have determiner function may largely depend on a wider linguistic and situational context.

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O DETERMINATORIMA U HRVATSKOME S GLEDIŠTA SISTEMSKE FUNKCIONALNE GRAMATIKE

U većini postojećih hrvatskih gramatika riječi se izravno analiziraju u (su)rečenice te se zato rečenica uzima kao glavna sintaktička jedinica. Posljedično, u takvim je gramatikama, uz rijetke iznimke (primjerice, Silić i Pranjković 2007; Belaj i Tanacković Faletar 2014), gotovo posve zanemarena sintaksa skupine i njezinih dijelova, sintaksa surečenice te sintaksa diskursa, a nedostatak opisa utemeljenog na određenom teorijskom pristupu dovodi do miješanja gramatičkih razina i neusustavljene terminologije. Na temelju proučavanja različitih suvremenih pristupa tumačenju imenskih skupina, zastupamo stav da se naziv 'atribut' na krivi način koristi u tradicionalnijim pristupima hrvatskoj gramatici te ističemo potrebu razlikovanja modifikatora od determinatora. K tome, ovaj rad nastoji pružiti i jednostavan model opisa imenskih skupina, s posebnim osvrtom na pojam determinatora, unutar teorijskog okvira sistemske funkcionalne gramatike (Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday i Matthiessen 2004; Fawcett 2010) kao pristupa koji jezik poima kao društvenu kategoriju i promatra ga u stvarnim komunikacijskim situacijama.

Ključne riječi: determinator; modifikator (atribut); imenska skupina; sistemska funkcionalna gramatika.