

Interpreting Adjectives Where They Have No Right to Be

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One of the more mysterious facts about the extended NP is that it's oddly permeable. Certain adjectives pronounced inside it often get interpreted as though they were outside, usually in positions in which no adjective can occur overtly. The most familiar such case is adverbial readings of adjectives, as in *The occasional sailor strolled by* (Bolinger 1967 and many others subsequently). These have been a longstanding curiosity, but are often thought peripheral and idiosyncratic. I will argue that such nonlocal readings (the term is due to Schwarz 2006) are both more common and more systematic than previously recognized. Nonlocal readings are typically given independent analyses for each narrow lexical class of adjectives. My empirical aim is to demonstrate that despite some real idiosyncrasies, the regularities are sufficient to require a unified account. Adjectives that give rise to these readings fall into three classes distinguished by the restrictions they impose on the quantificational force of their determiner. These restrictions and the unexpected wide scope of the adjective can both be explained by assuming that the relevant adjectives are quantificational, trigger QR from inside the DP, and leave behind a type-shifted trace. The hope is that a few minimal assumptions can account for the essential quantificational force generalizations, which are otherwise stipulated for these adjectives individually or left unobserved. The most important point, however, is empirical: that nonlocal readings are more widespread and more systematic than generally recognized, and that an integrated analysis is required.