

# A note on ‘other’\*

GUGLIELMO CINQUE

I. ‘Other’ is one of those words that languages could very well do without. Yet it is apparently grammatically encoded in all languages.<sup>1</sup> Its contribution to the meaning of the noun phrase has to do with the context of communication. If you ordered a beer and later you ask the same waiter for a beer, you are virtually forced to say “Can I have *another* beer?” even if “Can I have a beer?” could communicatively be just as effective. The speaker has to take into account what the addressee knows about the previous context. Context dependent, presuppositional, words of this kind (*same, still, no longer, not yet, etc.*) abound in the languages of the world.

Here I want to briefly discuss some evidence pointing to the existence of two readings of ‘other’, associated with two distinct positions in the extended projection of the NP.

These two readings are as a first approximation characterizable as in (1a) and (1b).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. further token(s) of x (where x is some substance/entity/measure)
- b. further type(s)/kind(s) of x (where x is some substance/entity/measure)

To begin, consider Italian *altro*. It can either precede or follow cardinals:

- (2) a. (gli) altri due libri di sintassi  
      (the) other two books on syntax
- b. (i) due altri libri di sintassi  
      (the) two other books on syntax

In this as in many other cases it is difficult to see a clear interpretive difference between the two orders, but there are cases where the difference comes out more clearly. When it makes little sense to have “further type(s)/kind(s) of x”, as in (3) and (4) (with measures, ‘minutes’

---

\* This short squib is dedicated to Josef Bayer as a small token of my great appreciation of his contributions to the field. I thank Alexander Grosu, Richard Kayne, Marie-Claude Paris, and Andrew Radford for their very useful comments.

1 A perusal of different grammars from different continents (North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Papua New Guinea) seems to support this conclusion, though as usual this can only be formulated as a conjecture. In some languages, Papuan (Rotokas – Firchow, 1974: 90 – and Maiani, Miani, Mala – Loeweke & May, 1982: 19), Mayan (Jacalteco – Grinevald Craig, 1977: 56, note 30) and Pama-Nyungan (Kayardild – Evans, 1995: 86f; Wankajunga – Jones, 2011: §4.2.3.6), it is a nominal affix, which points to its functional nature (on the functional nature of *other* also see Kayne, 2005: 13).

2 Thanks to Richard Kayne for the discussion of this point. See section II below for languages that express the two readings with two distinct morphemes. The distinction is occasionally made also for languages where the two readings are expressed by a single morpheme. See for example Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2011: 67) distinction between *significado aditivo* (*otro libro* ‘uno más’ (one more)) and *significado de alteridad* (*otro libro* ‘uno distinto’ (a different one)).

and ‘dollars’), the pre-cardinal position is the only natural one. On the contrary, when the context favors the reading “further type(s)/ kind(s) of x”, as in (5), it is the post-cardinal position that is the most natural:

- (3) a. Dammi altri cinque minuti!  
       ‘Give me another five minutes!’  
       b. \*?Dammi cinque altri minuti!  
       ‘Give me five other minutes!’
- (4) a. Mi puoi dare altri venti dollari?  
       ‘Can you give me another twenty dollars?’  
       b. \*?Mi puoi dare venti altri dollari?  
       ‘Can you give me twenty other dollars? (not in the sense of twenty other dollar bills)’
- (5) a. \*Se sopravviveranno, saranno altri due individui  
       ‘If they survive, they will be another two individuals’  
       b. Se sopravviveranno, saranno due altri individui  
       ‘If they survive, they will be two other individuals’

Michelle Sheehan tells me that there is a similar difference in English between (*an*)*other* preceding the cardinal and *other* following it.<sup>3</sup>

- (6) a. They ordered another two beers (“two further tokens of x”)  
       b. They ordered two other beers (“two further types/kinds of x”)

In forthcoming work Craig Sailor points out that *another*, if historically decomposable into *an + other*, is in some varieties of American English synchronically composed of *a + nother*, part of the evidence being the possibility of inserting certain adjectives between them

- (7) I saw John eat an entire cake, but after I left, he apparently ate a whole nother cake.

Interestingly, he adds that “use of *other* in place of *nother* with these interveners changes the output. For example, (7) is not equivalent to (8):

- (8) #...he ate a whole other cake.

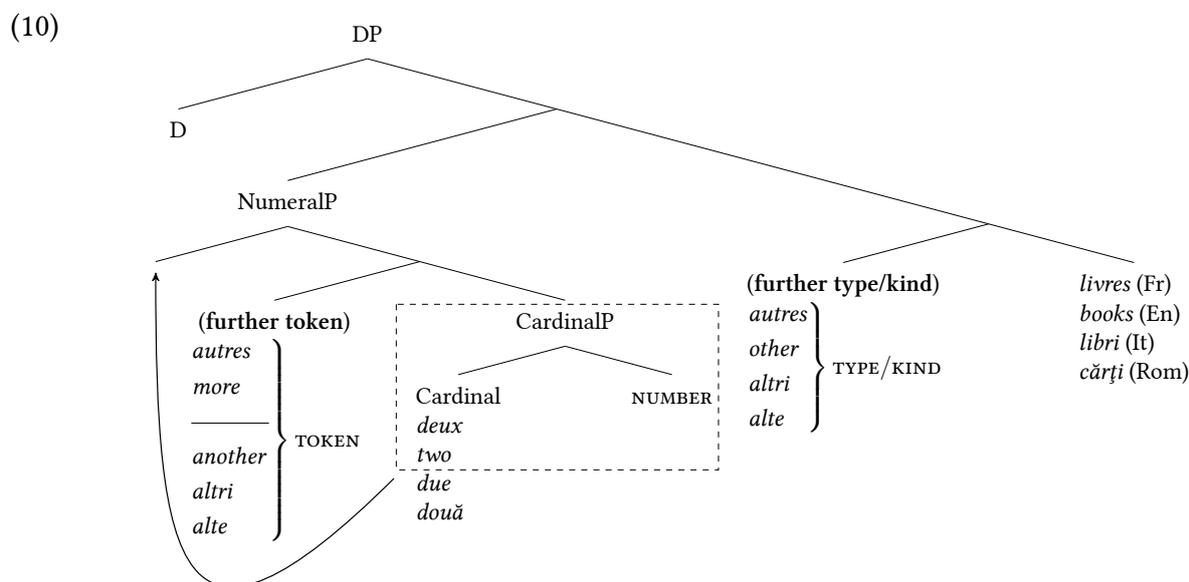
[which] is a statement about kinds: i.e., John ate a whole other KIND of cake. (Intuitively, *other* corresponds to ‘different KIND-OF N’ in these environments, whereas *nother* corresponds simply to ‘additional N’.”

3 Similarly: *he drank the other two beers* (“the two further tokens of x”) vs. *he drank the two other beers* (“the two further types/kinds of x”). As ‘additive’ *more* (*He drank two more beers*) seems to have just the “further token(s) of x” reading I take it to be merged before the cardinal, and to be crossed over by it like French *autre* is in (10). On ‘additive’ *more* in English see Greenberg (2009) and Greenberg (2010) and Thomas (2011). Unlike English *more*, which forces movement of the cardinal to its left, Italian *ancora* (*ancora due birre* ‘lit. still two beers’ = ‘two more beers’) and Romanian *inca* (*inca o bere* ‘lit. still one beer’ = ‘one more beer’) are incompatible with any such movement (\**due ancora birre*, \**o inca bere*).

Romance languages show some variation in the order of ‘other’ and cardinals. Italian as noted has ‘other’ preceding or following cardinals depending on the interpretation. Romanian *alt(ul)* appears to behave like Italian *altro* (Alexander Grosu, p.c.; Pană Dindelegan, 2013: §5.3.1.3). French instead appears to have the order cardinals > ‘other’ with both interpretations (compare (3) and (5) with (9)):

- (9) a. J’ai besoin de deux autres minutes/\*d’autres deux minutes (i.e. two additional minutes)  
 ‘I need another two/two more minutes’  
 b. Il faut utiliser deux autres isotopes/\*autres deux isotopes (i.e. two different isotopes)  
 ‘It is necessary to utilize two other isotopes’

I submit that the “further token(s) of x” ‘other’ is merged, as shown in (10), within the NumeralP above cardinals while the “further type(s)/kind(s) of x” ‘other’ is merged below the NumeralP. French, but not Italian, moves CardinalP past it so that both kinds of *autre* will follow cardinals in French:<sup>4</sup>



4 For the French data and judgments reported here I am indebted to Marie-Claude Paris. This difference between Italian and French concerning ‘other’ seems to be a special case of a more general pattern, which involves other “high” adjectives like *prossimo/prochain* ‘next’ and ordinals, like *primo/premier*, *ultimo/dernier*. While Italian allows both orders (*le prossime due settimane* ‘the next two weeks’, *le due prossime settimane* ‘the two next weeks’; *le prime/ultime due settimane* ‘the first/last two weeks’, *le due prime/ultime settimane* ‘the two first/last weeks’), French seems to admit only the order cardinal > *prochain/premier/dernier*. This can possibly be understood if ‘next’ and ordinals are also both inside the NumeralP (apparently between ‘other’ and the cardinals in the order ‘next’ > ordinal) and outside, and if movement of the cardinals to their left is also obligatory (movement of the cardinals to the left of *altro* is marginally possible also in Italian, for some speakers, as the “further token(s) of x” reading is not entirely excluded for them with the order cardinal > *altro*). The two ordinals may be combined in Italian (*i miei ultimi due primi giorni di scuola* ‘my last two first days of school’, with a slight pause after the cardinal) as they can in Russian (*poslednie pjat’ pervyx učitelej* ‘the last five first teachers’—Kagan & Pereltsvaig, 2012: 171). French instead (as expected) positions them both after the cardinal (*mes deux derniers premiers jours de l’école* ‘my last two first days of school’, again with a slight pause after the first ordinal).

The lower merger of ‘other’ qua “further type(s)/kind(s) of x” in the spine of the extended projection of NP below the NumeralP seems to be supported by the following fact from Matses (Panoan). According to Fleck (2003: 777), *utsi* ‘other’ in Matses is ambiguous between the two readings of (1) when it precedes the noun (see (11a)), but has only reading (1b). when it follows the noun. See (11b):

- (11) a. *utsi uicchun*  
           other bird (= a different bird or an additional (one more) bird)  
       b. *uicchun utsi*  
           bird other (=a different bird)

This pattern could be derived, it seems, if the noun (phrase) optionally raised along the spine of its extended projection past the lower “further type(s)/kind(s)” ‘other’ but no higher. If the lower ‘other’ were within the left branch containing the cardinal, after it, that would not be possible (under standard c-command requirements on chain links).

II. As mentioned above, while languages like Italian, Romanian, French, and English use the same morpheme for both readings of ‘other’, there are languages, including Modern Eastern Armenian (Indo-European), Yidiṣ and Kayardild (Pama-Nyungan), Chindali (Bantoid), Palaung (Mon-Khmer), and M̄ɔnɔ (Adamawa-Ubangi) which realize the two readings through two distinct morphemes.

Dum-Tragut (2002: §III.2.3.8.1) reports the existence of two different words in Modern Eastern Armenian for ‘other’, *myus* and *ayl*, which she glosses in the way shown in (12) and (13):

- (12) *im myus erek<sup>c</sup> grk<sup>c</sup>er-ə* (Dum-Tragut, 2002: 71, ex. (116))  
       my **other** three books-the  
       ‘my other three books’ (meaning ‘three more books of mine’)  
       (13) *im erek<sup>c</sup> ayl grk<sup>c</sup>er-ə* (Dum-Tragut, 2002: 71, ex. (117))  
       my three **other** books-the  
       ‘my three other books’ (meaning ‘my three somehow-different books’)

It should be noted that they also differ in distribution. The one apparently meaning “further token(s) of x” precedes the numeral while the one apparently meaning “further type(s)/kind(s) of x” follows it (bearing resemblance to the Italian and English cases seen above).

Dixon (1977) reports that Yidiṣ has two separate words for ‘(an)other’: “*bagil* ‘another—a further token of the same type’ and *gayal* ‘another—a token of a different type’”, and says that “*bagil* describes another object similar to something already referred to”(Dixon, 1977: 497), while “*gayal* indicates something totally novel”(Dixon, 1977: 498).

Another Pama-Nyungan language apparently making the same distinction is Kayardild. Evans (1995: 186) reports the existence of two morphemes for ‘other’. One is an affix, *-yarralH*, which he glosses as “another token of the same type” (see (14a)), and says that “to convey the other sense of English ‘other’ (i.e. ‘different’), the free nominal *jatha-a* is used” (Evans, 1995: 187) (see (14b)):

- (14) a. kukuju-yarrad-a  
uncle-another-NOM  
'another uncle'  
b. kamarr jatha-a wuran-d  
stonefish.NOM other-NOM sort-NOM  
'Now the stonefish is something else again'

The Bantoid language Chindali also has two separate morphemes for 'other', *-nine*, which (Botne, 2008: 50f) glosses as '(an)other [of the same kind]', and *-ngi*, which he glosses as '(an)other [of a different kind]', exemplified in (15a) and (15b):

- (15) a. umúnine akáfwa  
another died  
b. bakabāāmwo ábáá fikolo ifiingi  
there were those of other clans

Palaung (Mon-Khmer) also has two different words for 'other', *(i-)har* and *lāi*, which Milne (1921) glosses as 'another' and 'other/different', respectively, giving examples like (16a)-(16b):

- (16) a. dēh kā i-har ta o u to (Milne, 1921: 49)  
give fish other to me one  
'give me another fish'  
b. lāi rū (Milne, 1921: 51)  
other or different villages  
'other villages'

The same is true of Mɔ̀nɔ̀ (Adamawa-Ubangi). Kamanda-Kola (2003: 318) renders the two separate forms, *ángá* and *àngbi*, as "autre de même nature" and "autre de nature différente", respectively.

Both the distributional and the lexicalization data reviewed above thus seem to point to the existence of two distinct (functional) categories 'other', located in two different positions of the extended projection of the noun phrase:

- (17) ...[[ 'other' (further token(s) of x) cardinal] [ 'other' (further type(s)/kind(s) of x)...N]]

## References

- Botne, R. 2008. *A grammatical sketch of Chindali (Malawian variety)*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.  
Dixon, R. M. W. 1977. *A grammar of Yidj*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Dum-Tragut, J. 2002. *Word order correlations and word order change: An "applied-typological" study on literary Armenians varieties*. München: Lincom Europa.  
Evans, N. D. 1995. *A grammar of Kayardild*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.  
Firchow, I. 1974. *A grammar of Rotokas*. Ukarumpa: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

- Fleck, D. W. 2003. *A grammar of Matsigenka*. <https://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/18526>. Rice University PhD thesis.
- Greenberg, Y. 2009. Additivity in the domain of eventuality (or: Oliver Twist's *more*). In M. Prinzhorn, V. Schmitt & S. Zobel (eds.), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 14*, 151–167. Vienna.
- Greenberg, Y. 2010. Aspectual and pragmatic constraints on the verbal additive particle *more*. Ms., [www.semanticsarchive.net](http://www.semanticsarchive.net).
- Grinevald Craig, C. 1977. *The structure of Jacalteco*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Gutiérrez Rodríguez, E. 2011. Adjetivos y determinantes. In M. Escandell Vidal, M. Leonetti & C. Sánchez López (eds.), *60 problemas de gramática: dedicados a Ignacio Bosque*, 62–76. Madrid: Akal.
- Jones, B. 2011. *A grammar of Wangkajunga: A language of the Great Sandy Desert of North Western Australia*. Canberra: Pacific linguistics.
- Kagan, O. & A. Pereltsvaig. 2012. Motivating the DP projection in languages without articles. In E. Cohen (ed.), *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics 68*, 167–178.
- Kamanda-Kola, R. 2003. *Phonologie et morpho-syntaxe du Mə̀nə̀*. München: Lincom Europa.
- Kayne, R. S. 2005. Some notes on comparative syntax: With special reference to English and French. In G. Cinque & R. S. Kayne (eds.), *Handbook of comparative syntax*, 3–69. (also in R.S. Kayne *Movement and Silence*. 277–333. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Loeweke, E. & J. May. 1982. *Grammar of Maijani, Miani and Mala – three languages of the Kaukombaran language family*. Ukarumpa: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Milne, L. 1921. *An elementary Palaung grammar*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Pană Dindelegan, G. 2013. *The grammar of Romanian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thomas, G. 2011. Incremental *more*. In O. Bonami & P. Cabredo Hofherr (eds.), *Empirical issues in syntax and semantics*, vol. 8, 487–510. <http://www.cssp.cnrs.fr/eiss8>.