
Subject: Re: A strange behaviour of parameters passing

Posted by [davidf](#) on Fri, 04 Jun 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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William Daffer (vapuser@catspaw.jpl.nasa.gov) writes:

- > There's nothing wrong with passing expressions, unless you want to
- > change the value of the parameter inside a routine. It would be nice
- > if they gave us some way of checking whether an expression, rather
- > than a named variable, had been passed in. I am unaware of any such
- > capability.
- >
- > I don't think you can call this is a bug; I think it's a feature.

While we are on the subject of passing by reference (IDL variables) and passing by value (anything else, including expressions, system variables, structure de-references, etc.), I should just point out that this is *exactly* why this expression does NOT work in IDL:

```
FOR j=0, 10 DO Readf, lun, variable[j]
```

Although, I have to admit, it is an expression that every one of us has used at least once (and many times if we come to IDL from a FORTRAN background). People are still confused about why it produces no error message (Answer: because it actual *works*), and still returns no useful information.

In fact, here is a riddle Bilbo could have used with Smaug:

What works perfectly in IDL, but gives you no useful information?

Answer: Reading into subscripted variables!

Cheers,

David

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