Subject: Re: [Q] readf into an array error Posted by peter on Mon, 05 Feb 1996 08:00:00 GMT

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Ken Knighton (knighton@gav.gat.com) wrote:

- : peter@hpl.hp.com (Peter Webb) wrote:
- : >This is due to the argument passing mechanism used in IDL. If an array
- : >is passed to a function, it is passed by reference. If a subarray is
- : >passed, it is passed by value, and thus cannot be overwritten.
- : By the way, I found the documentation for this on page 10-7 of the
- : user's guide. This documents everything except that structure
- : members are passed by value. This tidbit is documented on page
- : 7-5 of the user's guide.

As Ken mentions, this behavior is documented. However, the whole section on argument passing is very badly written. From the PV-Wave manual, which I believe is a direct copy of the IDL manual,

"When a procedure...is called, the actual parameters are copiend ito the formal parameters... On exit,...formal are copied back to actual if they are not expressions or constants."

This is, at best, a feeble attempt to describe pass by reference. The parameters are not copied, they are referenced (try passing an array so large that copying would use up all memory -- you can do it, ergo no copying happened).

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Peter

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