

Descriptive and Possessive Pronominal Adjectives

We've already discussed a little bit about grammatical gender in BCS, and if you recall, I mentioned that all adjectives and any words that modify nouns change according to the gender of the noun. So, if you want to say the two consecutive phrases "a tall man" and "a tall woman," the word "tall" in BCS will change according to the gender of the words "man" and "woman." Take a look:

Visoki čovek/čovjek A tall man
Visoka žena A tall woman

The word "visoki/visoka" changes according to the gender of the noun. Let's look at some more examples, this time with the adjective meaning "beautiful":

Lepi/Lijepi udžbenik A beautiful textbook
Lepa/Lijepa knjiga A beautiful book
Lepo/Lijepo polje A beautiful field

If the noun is an F2 noun, it would follow the same pattern: *lepa/lijepa stvar*, "a beautiful thing." Sometimes you'll see a masculine adjective without the "-i" ending, like in the phrase we've already seen many times, *Dobar dan*. Or in a sentence like, *To je dobar čovek/čovjek*, "That is a good man." There are reasons for this. For example, if the noun being modified by the adjective is couched in a specific context, then the short form will be used. We'll discuss this more later this week, but for the most part, don't worry about it too much at this stage in your language learning, just know that sometimes masculine adjectives will have an "-i" and sometimes they won't.

So now let's talk about possessive pronominal adjectives. These are words like "theirs," "yours," "his," "ours," etc. There's kind of a lot of them. Let's look at a chart:

| <i>Possessive Pronominal Adjectives</i> | Singular | Plural |
|---|--|--|
| 1st person | <i>Moj/Moja/Moje</i> (my/mine) | <i>Naš/Naša/Naše</i> (our/ours) |
| 2nd person | <i>Tvoj/Tvoja/Tvoje</i> (your/yours) | <i>Vaš/Vaša/Vaše</i> (your/yours pl. and formal) |
| 3rd person | <i>Njegov/Njegova/Njegovo</i> (his) <i>Njen/Njena/Njeno</i> (her/hers) <i>Njezin/Njezina/Njezino</i> (her/hers in Cr.) | <i>Njihov/Njihova/Njihovo</i> (their/theirs) |

Keep in mind that there are two words that mean “her/hers,” one of them specifically for Croatia. Now, let’s see some of these words in context. Some examples:

Ovo je moja mama. This is my mom.
To je tvoj pas. That is your dog.
Njegova sestra je lepa/lijepa. His sister is beautiful.
Njen/Njezin brat je dobar. Her brother is good.
Naše pismo nije dugo. Our letter is not long.
Vaša kuća je velika. Our house is big.
Njihova mačka je slatka. Their cat is cute.

You’ll notice that each possessive pronominal adjective changes according to the gender of the noun. So just because a word might mean “his” doesn’t mean that it won’t have a feminine ending (see above: *njegova sestra*). Let’s look at some more complicated sentences:

Da li je to tvoja haljina?/Je li to tvoja haljina? Is that your dress?
Da li ste vi moj profesor?/Jeste li vi moj profesor? Are you (formal) my professor?
Ko/Tko je to? To je njihov otac. Who is that? That’s their father.
Gde/Gdje je vaše polje? Where is your field?
Šta/Što je ovo? Ovo je njena knjiga. What is this? This is her book.

Can you come up with some sentences or dialogs of your own?