Parenthesis and Comparative Operator Deletion

0. Introduction

Parenthetical constructions in Hungarian introduced by mint ‘than/as’:

(1) A teknősök, mint tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.
    the turtles as know-1.Pl. like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.
    ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

mint introduces ordinary comparative subclauses too:

● comparatives expressing equality:

(2) Peti olyan magas, mint az apja.
    Peter so tall as the father-Poss.3.Sg.
    ‘Peter is as tall as his father.’

● comparatives expressing inequality:

(3) Peti magasabb, mint az apja.
    Peter taller than the father-Poss.3.Sg.
    ‘Peter is taller than his father.’

comparative operator – e.g. amilyen ‘how’ in the subclause

● optionally present in ordinary comparative subclauses (following mint)

● cannot co-occur with mint in parenthetical clauses

→ proposal: mint + comparative operator ruled out in parentheticals due to the presence of a null operator (standing for the missing object)

1. Operators in comparative subclauses


(4) CP
    C'
    C than Op. C'
    ... Ø

targets the lower [Spec; CP] position
comparative operator: relative operator

reasons for movement: comparatives obey islands

- wh-island:

(5) a. *Frank killed more dragons than \(OP_x\), Margaret wondered [whether to kiss \(t_x\)].

b. Frank killed more dragons than \(OP_x\), Margaret wanted to kiss \(t_x\).

- complex NP islands:

(6) a. *Frank killed more dragons than \(OP_x\) he had outlined [a plan to kill \(t_x\)].

b. Frank killed more dragons than \(OP_x\) he planned to kill \(t_x\).

overt operators also realised in the lower [Spec; CP] position

overt operators in English:

(7) % John is taller than what Mary is. (Chomsky 1977, 87, ex. 51a)

2. Comparative subclauses in Hungarian

comparative complementiser: mint ‘as/than’

- optional overt operators:

(8) a. Peti olyan magas, mint (amilyen) az apja.
Peter so tall as how the father-Poss.3.Sg.
‘Peter is as tall as his father.’

b. Peti magasabb, mint (amilyen) az apja.
Peter taller than how the father-Poss.3.Sg.
‘Peter is taller than his father.’

- amilyen ‘how’ may be combined with a lexical AP (↔ what in English):

(9) a. Peti olyan magas, mint amilyen (magas) az apja.
Peter so tall as how tall the father-Poss.3.Sg.
‘Peter is as tall as his father.’

b. Peti magasabb, mint amilyen (magas) az apja.
Peter taller than how tall the father-Poss.3.Sg.
‘Peter is taller than his father.’
• if the AP in the subclause is not e-GIVEN (cf. Merchant 2001), then it cannot be eliminated:

(10) a. A kutya olyan kövér, mint amilyen széles a kutyaház.

    the dog as fat as how wide the doghouse

    ‘The dog is as fat as the doghouse is wide.’

    b. A kutya kövérebb, mint amilyen széles a kutyaház.

    the dog fatter than how wide the doghouse

    ‘The dog is fatter than the doghouse is wide.’

→ quantified expression may remain overt irrespectively of whether it is e-GIVEN or not

e-GIVEN QP: logically identical QP in the matrix clause (cf. Bacskai-Atkari 2010)

but: if the AP is e-GIVEN, then the operator is also optional in Hungarian

    AP requires the presence of the operator otherwise

3. Parenthetical clauses and operators

cParenthetical clauses introduced by mint ‘as’

expectation: operator should be optional

    no matrix clausal antecedent in the form of a QP

    → no lexical AP taken by the operator

element ahogy ‘how’ – normally a VP-modifying adverbial operator

(11) a. A teknősök, mint (ahogy) tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.

    the turtles as how know-1.Pl. like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.

    ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

    b. Az igazgató, mint (ahogy) elmondta, maga is meglepődött a

    the headmaster as how PART-said-3.Sg. himself too surprised-3.Sg. the

    jó eredményeken.

    good results

    ‘The headmaster, as he said, was surprised by the good results himself.’
↔ _amilyen_ ‘how’: cannot co-occur with _mint_: 

(12) a. Peti, (*_mint_ _amilyen_ magas, be fogja verni a Peter as how tall PARTAux.Fut.3.Sg. hit the fejét. head-Poss.3.Sg.Acc. ‘Peter, tall as he is, will hit his head.’

b. Peti, (*_mint_ _amilyen_ magas ember, be fogja verni a Peter as how tall person PARTAux.Fut.3.Sg. hit the fejét. head-Poss.3.Sg.Acc. ‘Peter, tall as he is, will hit his head.’

lexical AP (and/or NP) in (12) cannot be deleted ↔ comparatives

→ operator has to remain overt if the AP moves to the [Spec, CP] position

question: why _mint_ has to be eliminated

↔ comparatives

↔ parentheticals with _ahogy_

4. **Null operators in parenthetical clauses**

some properties of reduced parenthetical clauses


● the verb lacks one of its arguments required by its valency

● no overt syntactic link to the host they are attached to

● host clause visible to parenthetical clause but not vice versa

● one valency requirement of the parenthetical verb satisfied by the host clause itself

empty operators in parentheticals (Schneider 2007; Heringa 2011)

_as_-parentheticals: null operator moving to [Spec; CP] ~ missing object (Potts 2002: 62)

(13) Cuckoos don’t build nests, as _Op_1 everybody knows _t_1.
Hungarian parentheticals: verb in the objective paradigm

(14) a. A teknősök, mint tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.
    the turtles as know-1.Pl.Objective like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.
    ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

      b. *A teknősök, mint tudunk, szeretik a rákot.
          the turtles as know-1.Pl.Subjective like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.
          ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

→ there must be an object that the verb agrees with

no overt object relative pronoun in Hungarian parentheticals:

(15) a. *A teknősök, mint amit tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.
    the turtles as what-Acc. know-1.Pl.Objective like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.
    ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

      b. *A teknősök, mint amit tudunk, szeretik a rákot.
          the turtles as what-Acc. know-1.Pl.Subjective like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.
          ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

overt relative pronouns would trigger the subjective paradigm:

(16) a. Ez az, amit tudunk.
    this that know-1.Pl.Objective
    ‘This is what we know.’

      b. *Ez az, amit tudjuk.
          this that know-1.Pl.Objective
          ‘This is what we know.’

null operator licenses a resumptive pronoun:

(17) A teknősök, mint azt tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.
    the turtles as that-Acc. know-1.Pl.Objective like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.
    ‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’

null operator targets the lower [Spec; CP] → cannot co-occur with elements that moving there

5. Multiple operators

recall: comparative operators may appear in parentheticals:

(18) Peti, (*mint) amilyen magas, be fogja verni a
    Peter as how tall PART Aux.Fut.3.Sg. hit the
    fejét.
    head-Poss.3.Sg.Acc.
    ‘Peter, tall as he is, will hit his head.’
but: *mint* ‘as’ a higher C head and null operator in the lower [Spec; CP] – e.g. (14):

(19) \[ \]

→ comparative operator *amilyen* ‘how’ and null operator competing for the same position?

- *amilyen* may co-occur with the null operator – (18)
- *mint* can co-occur with the null operator but not with the comparative operator – (18)
- there are two [Spec; CP] positions

→ multiple operators in (18):

(20) \[

- *mint* ruled out because of the Doubly Filled COMP Filter
- *amilyen* has to move up to a [Spec; CP] position – [EDGE] feature
- overtness requirement: there has to be an overt element marking [+compr] at the left edge
6. Multiple complementisers

`ahogy` ‘how’ may co-occur with `mint` ‘as’:

\[(21) \text{A tekőzők, mint (ahogy) tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.} \]
\[\text{the turtles as how know-1.Pl. like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.} \]
\[\text{‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’} \]

→ `ahogy` cannot be in the higher [Spec; CP] – it follows `mint`

→ `ahogy` cannot be in the lower [Spec; CP] – there is the null operator

proposal: `ahogy` is a grammaticalised (lower) C head:

\[(22) \]
\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{C'} \\
\text{C} \\
\text{mint} \\
\text{Op.} \\
\text{C'} \\
\text{…} \\
\text{ahogy}
\end{array} \]

● `ahogy` cannot combine with lexical APs (↔ `amilyen` ‘how’)

● the absence of `mint` results in degraded acceptability

\[(23) \text{?/?? A tekőzők, ahogy tudjuk, szeretik a rákot.} \]
\[\text{the turtles how know-1.Pl. like-3.Pl. the shrimp-Acc.} \]
\[\text{‘Turtles, as we know, like shrimp.’} \]

→ Force-marking higher C head filled only if lower C head moves up – markedness

    overt marking of [+compr] – preferably in the higher CP node

\[\text{ahogy normally not moving there ↔ `amilyen` as an operator} \]

● possible because it does not have features a C head could not have – grammaticalisation

~ other complementisers in Old and Middle Hungarian (cf. Bacskaï-Atkari 2012)

relative cycle (cf. van Gelderen 2004, 2009; Roberts and Roussou 2003)
Conclusion

comparative parenthetical clauses contain two operators

comparative operator and null operator

they can co-occur in two distinct [Spec; CP] positions

→ three possible configurations:

● two operators

● overt mint + null operator

● two overt C heads + null operator

all other configurations ruled out by economy principles

References


Heringa, Herman (2011) Appositional Constructions. Utrecht: LOT.


