Extended Projections of Adjectives and Comparative Deletion

0. Introduction

comparative subclauses in English:

(1) a. Mary is taller than Peter is tall.
   b. The desk is longer than the office is wide.

Comparative Deletion: traditionally referring to the deletion of a GIVEN AP
cf. Bresnan (1973)
but: overt operators in English (dialectal differences):

(2) a. Mary is taller than what Peter is.
   b. The desk is longer than what the office is wide.

other languages permit overt operators and APs, e.g. Hungarian:

(3) a. Mari magasabb, mint amilyen magas Péter volt.
   Mary taller than how tall Peter was
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’
   b. Mari magasabb, mint amennyire Péter volt magas.
   Mary taller than how much Peter was tall
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter.’

→ question: how differences in the operator s and in the information structure interact
   i.e. how languages differ in terms of Comparative Deletion

proposal:
● Comparative Deletion is dependent on the overtness of the operator
● AP deletion is dependent on whether the AP may be stranded

1. Operator movement and the left periphery of the comparative subclause


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

reasons for movement:

- comparatives obey islands (e.g. wh-island, complex NP islands)
- overt operators also realised in the lower [Spec; CP] position – cf. (2) and (3)

syntactic motivation: regular movement of a [+rel] operator
→ not specific to comparatives

2. Givenness, F-marking and the copy theory of movement

two copies of the degree expression:

(5) Mary is taller than [x-tall] Peter is [x-tall].

questions:

- what moves up to the lower [Spec; CP]
- what eliminates material from the lower [Spec; CP]
- what happens to the lower copy

in (5): movement of the entire degree expression

interrogatives with *how:

(6) a. How tall is John?
    b. *How is John tall?

operator inseparable from the lexical AP (← internal structure of the degree expression)

movement:

(7)

deletion in [Spec; CP]: Comparative Deletion (cf. Bacskaï-Atkari 2012)

lower copy: regularly deleted at PF as a lower copy

in (5): possible because the AP is GIVEN – recoverability (cf. Merchant 2001)
→ both copies are deleted in (5):
(8) Mary is taller than [x-tall] Peter is [x-tall].

but: F-marked lower copies remain:
(9) The desk is longer than the office is wide.

underlyingly:
(10) The desk is longer than [x-wide] the office is [x-wide].

debauchment of both copies not possible ← wide not GIVEN
   higher copy has to be eliminated by Comparative Deletion
   lower copy remains overt – the pronunciation of the higher copy would make the
derivation crash at PF (cf. Bošković and Nunes 2007: 48)

wide in (9): contrastive – expresses the main contrast involved in the construction
   clausal-final position: canonical position for foci in English
   cf. Selkirk (1984, 1986); Nespor and Vogel (1986); McCarthy and Prince (1993)

   overt lower copy of a non-contrastive AP: ungrammatical
   should regularly be eliminated as a lower copy
   should not appear in a contrastive position
(11) */* Mary is taller than Peter is tall.

3. On Hungarian operators

● operator amilyen ‘how’:
(12) a. Mari magasabb, mint amilyen magas Péter volt. Mary taller than how.tall Peter was
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’
   b. *Mari magasabb, mint amilyen Péter volt magas. Mary taller than how Peter was tall
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

→ amilyen inseparable from the lexical AP

● operator amennyire ‘how much’:
(13) a. Mari magasabb, mint amennyire magas Péter volt. Mary taller than how.much tall Peter was
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’
   b. Mari magasabb, mint amennyire Péter volt magas. Mary taller than how.much Peter was tall
   ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

→ amennyire separable from the lexical AP
• no zero operator:

    Mary taller than tall Peter was
    ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

    Mary taller than Peter was tall
    ‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

differences not dependent on whether the AP is GIVEN or F-marked:

(15) a. Az asztal hosszabb, mint amilyen széles az iroda.
    the desk longer than how wide the office
    ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

    b. *Az asztal hosszabb, mint amilyen az iroda széles.
    the desk longer than how the office wide
    ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

(16) a. Az asztal hosszabb, mint amennyire széles az iroda.
    the desk longer than how much wide the office
    ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

    b. Az asztal hosszabb, mint amennyire az iroda széles.
    the desk longer than how much the office wide
    ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

(17) a. *Az asztal hosszabb, mint széles az iroda.
    the desk longer than wide the office
    ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

    b. *Az asztal hosszabb, mint az iroda széles.
    the desk longer than the office wide
    ‘The desk is longer than the office is wide.’

→ Hungarian has no Comparative Deletion but there are two types of operators:

- **amilyen:** must move together with the AP:
  
  higher copy of the entire degree expression overt in [Spec; CP]

  lower copy of the entire degree expression deleted regularly

- **amennyire:** can move out on its own – if so:
  
  higher copy of *amennyire* appears overtly in [Spec; CP] but no AP there

  lower copy of *amennyire* deleted regularly, AP remains overt in situ
difference also attested in interrogative operators:

- \textit{milyen} ‘how’:
  
  (18) a. \textbf{Milyen magas} volt Péter?
    
    how
tall
was
Peter

    ‘How tall was Peter?’

  b. *\textbf{Milyen} volt Péter \textbf{magas}?
    
    how
was
Peter
tall

    ‘How tall was Peter?’

- \textit{mennyire} ‘how much’:

  (19) a. \textbf{Mennyire magas} volt Péter?
    
    how.much
tall
was
Peter

    ‘How tall was Peter?’

  b. \textbf{Mennyire} volt Péter \textbf{magas}?
    
    how.much
was
Peter
tall

    ‘How tall was Peter?’

\textbf{4. The structure of degree expressions}

\text{DegP} – degree head

- takes two arguments (cf. Lechner 2004)
  
  lexical AP

  Grade argument – standard value

- projects a QP layer

  Deg moves up to Q

  specifier of QP may host other QP modifiers

degree expressions in the subclause (e.g. \textit{amilyen}/\textit{amennyire magas} ‘how/how much tall’):

(21) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{QP} \\
\text{amennyire} \\
\text{AP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Q} \\
\text{Q’} \\
\text{DegP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Deg}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{G}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{t} \text{t}_i
\end{array}
\]
economy $\rightarrow$ amilyen and amennyire cannot be co-present ($\sim$ Doubly Filled Comp Filter)

structural difference $\rightarrow$ amennyire may be extracted on its own ($\leftrightarrow$ amilyen)

5. Proforms

so far: degree expressions containing a lexical AP

amilyen: may appear without a lexical AP

\begin{enumerate}
\item Mari magasabb, mint amilyen Péter volt.
\end{enumerate}

Mary taller than how Peter was

‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

Deg head may not require an overt AP

expectation: amennyire should different

$\leftarrow$ proforms standing for the DegP, not the QP

\begin{enumerate}
\item *Mari magasabb, mint amennyire Péter volt.
\end{enumerate}

Mary taller than how much Peter was

‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

6. Operators in English

three (possible) operators: zero, how, what

● what: invariably proform Deg head that prohibits the co-presence of an overt AP

\begin{enumerate}
\item Mary is taller than what Peter is.
\item *Mary is taller than what Peter is tall.
\item *The desk is longer than what the office is wide.
\end{enumerate}

similarly in interrogatives:

\begin{enumerate}
\item *What tall is Peter?
\item *What is Peter tall?
\end{enumerate}

● how: available only for some speakers; Deg head requiring the co-presence of an overt AP

\begin{enumerate}
\item OK/*Mary is taller than how tall Peter is.
\item *Mary is taller than how Peter is tall.
\item *Mary is taller than how Peter is.
\end{enumerate}
7. The role of information structure

Comparative Deletion ≠ the elimination of a GIVEN AP positional differences between GIVEN and F-marked APs (if the operator is separable)

amennyire ‘how much’ + GIVEN AP:

(28) a. Mari magasabb, mint amennyire magas Péter volt.
Mary taller than how.much tall Peter was
‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

b. #Mari magasabb, mint amennyire Péter magas volt.
Mary taller than how.much Peter tall was
‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

c. ??Mari magasabb, mint amennyire Péter volt magas.
Mary taller than how.much Peter was tall
‘Mary is taller than Peter was.’

→ preferred position for an F-marked AP

amennyire ‘how much’ + F-marked AP:

(29) a. ?A macska kövérebb, mint amennyire széles a macskaajtó volt.
the cat fatter than how.much wide the cat flap was
‘The cat is fatter than the cat flap was wide.’

b. A macska kövérebb, mint amennyire a macskaajtó széles volt.
the cat fatter than how.much the cat flap wide was
‘The cat is fatter than the cat flap wide was.’

c. ?A macska kövérebb, mint amennyire a macskaajtó volt széles.
the cat fatter than how.much the cat flap was wide
‘The cat is fatter than the cat flap wide was.’

cyclic movement: from VP to FP, from FP to CP → two positions for the stranded AP
Conclusion

three factors:

- overtness of the operator – Comparative Deletion
- position of the operator in the degree expression – AP separable
- information structure – preferred position of the AP

reducing Comparative Deletion:

- overtness requirement on the operator taking a lexical AP in [Spec; CP]

References


