On the Parametric Variation of Deletion in Comparatives  
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The Problem
Two main categories of deletion phenomena in comparative constructions: Comparative Deletion (CD) and Comparative Ellipsis (CE)

Traditional analyses (Principles and Parameters framework): CD is universally principled (~CE), and is defined on the basis of its being obligatory. But: cross-linguistic data show that CD is subject to parametric variation

Proposal: a functional definition based on the target site of CD, which may be better applied when accounting for the parametric variation in the comparative subclause.

The Structure of Comparatives

(1) Mary is more intelligent than Peter is x-intelligent
   ➞ Target: adjectival, adverbial or nominal constituent (after movement to Spec, CP)

(2) Why is x-intelligent a certain absolute degree in the construction; realized as X

Comparative Deletion:
(3a) Mary is taller than Peter is x-tall
(3b) The tiger ran faster than Léz drove x-fast
(3c) Susan has more cats than Peter has x-many cats

Comparative Ellipsis:
(4a) Mary is taller than Peter is x-tall
(4b) The tiger ran faster than Léz drove x-fast
(4c) Susan has more cats than Peter has x-many cats

The Standard Analysis

Comparative Deletion:

(3a) Mary is taller than Peter is x-tall
(3b) The tiger ran faster than Léz drove x-fast
(3c) Susan has more cats than Peter has x-many cats

Comparative Ellipsis:

(4a) Mary is taller than Peter is x-tall
(4b) The tiger ran faster than Léz drove x-fast
(4c) Susan has more cats than Peter has x-many cats

The Interaction of Deletion Phenomena – Comparative Verb Gapping

The application of CD may require ellipsis for the structure to converge:

(8a) ??Tőbbzőr ettem macskát kavírával, mint ahányzor Péter fürdött malacot szivacsval. (Hungarian)
(8b) More often fed-I cat-ACC. caviar-with than x-often Peter bathed pig-ACC. sponge-with
   ‘I fed cats more often with caviar than Peter bathed pigs with a sponge.’

CE: the deletion of the finite verb (CVG) saves the construction (though the meaning changes due to recoverability):

(8c) Tőbbzőr ettem macskát kavírával, mint Péter fürdött malacot szivacsval. (Hungarian)
(8d) More often fed-I cat-ACC. caviar-with than Peter bathed pig-ACC. sponge-with
   ‘I fed cats more often with caviar than Peter fed pigs with a sponge.’

Adjectives/adverbial and nominal constituents becomes superfluous

New definition of CD: an operation eliminating the functionally extended AP (the QP) from the comparative subclause, if that AP is identical with the one in the matrix clause.

Advantages:
- Based on the target site – it is universally applicable since it allows for the [±CE] parametric variation
- Subcomparatives do not have to be treated as exceptional:

(9) If the AP in the subclause is different from the one in the matrix clause, CD by definition does not apply to it.

(10) Susan has more cats than Peter has many dogs.

Languages with [±CE] parametric setting:
- There are optional operations not necessarily specific to comparatives,
- However, there are ellipsis phenomena, such as CVG, that are strongly related to the presence/absence of the operator

References