

Comparative coordination in the nominal domain



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1. DATA

NOMINAL COMPARISON WITHIN THE DP:

- (1) [_{DP} More women [than men]] consider the discriminatory situation a serious matter.
(1') [_{DP} Gizon baino] emakume gehi-ago-k jotzen dute bereizkeria-egoera larritzat.
man THAN woman many-ER-ERG consider AUX discrimination serious

ADJECTIVAL COMPARISON WITHIN THE DP:

- (2) We have seen [_{DP} a [smaller [than small] snowflake]].
(2') [Elur maluta [_{DP} txiki baino] txiki-ago] bat ikusi dugu.
snowflake small THAN small-ER one seen have

2. MAIN CLAIMS

- These nominal and adjectival comparatives have **phrasal standards**.
 - Not all comparative structures involve **degree abstraction** (or **Op(erator)-movement**; Chomsky 1977).
 - Same distribution as **coordinated nominals** and **coordinated adjectives**.
 - The standard marker (*than*, *baino*):
 - Not a complementizer
 - Not a preposition/postposition
 - Coordinating conjunction**
- ← Comparative Coordination analysis for phrasal comparatives
- (3) a. Ann is taller than I expected / his father is.
b. Ann is taller than him.
- (4) John is eager to see the movies, and me too. (Gapped CP, Lechner 2004)

3. PREVIOUS DESCRIPTIONS

- Grammars of Basque assume that the complement of *baino* always derives from a **clausal source**, as argued for English comparatives (Lechner 2004).
(5) Many more women achieved that [than men did achieve that].
(5') [Lortu—duten gizon-ek baino] emakume gehi-ago-k lortu dute.
achieve have.C man-ERG THAN woman many-ER-ERG achieved have
- Basque is considered a “free word order” language. Evidence: the standard cluster can be easily **displaced** (Hualde & Ortiz 2003, Goenaga 2012).
(6) [...]_i Emakume gehiago-k lortu dute [gizon-ek baino]_i. (cf. 5)
woman many-ER-ERG achieved have man-ERG THAN
- Both English *than* and Basque *baino* have been categorised as either **complementizers** or **adpositions** to account for these properties (Bresnan 1973, Chomsky 1977, Goenaga 2012).

6. CONCLUSION

- Unified analysis of nominal and adjectival comparatives with a phrasal standard.
 - Not all comparatives should be analysed as cases of degree abstraction (or *Op(erator)-movement*; cf. Chomsky 1977).
 - Great challenge for the analysis of comparative markers as generalized quantifiers over degrees.
 - The behavior of the standard marker is best described as a coordinating conjunction, and not as a complementizer or an adposition.
 - Supporting evidence for the *coordination analysis* of comparatives, even in comparatives with phrasal standards.
- Further issues:**
- Adjectival comparatives such as *smaller than small* have a further interesting property (see Vela-Plo 2018, in prep. for a detailed description):
(20) Mikel is taller than tall. #But he is not tall. (entailment: positive degree)
 - The categorial nature of the standard marker does not seem to be fixed across all comparative types. See example (6), which allows permutation of the standard.

4. NOVEL OBSERVATIONS

Crucially, the comparatives in (1-2) and (5-6) show completely different properties.

PHRASAL NATURE

- Linearization** in English. Compare (1) and (5) with (7).
(7) *Many more women [than men did] achieved that.
- Modifiers:**
(8) More women than men [from Bilbao] (cf. (18))
(9) *More women than I thought [from Bilbao]
- Bare nominals (gizon)** are banned from argumental positions in Basque. The absence of case-marking on the NP signals the presence of a phrasal standard.
- A **reduced clausal analysis** of the standard in the attributive comparatives in (2) and (2') is untenable. Clausal elements like **RCs** behave differently:
(10) [_{DP} the snowflake *that we saw*] vs. [_{DP} a smaller than small snowflake]
(10') [Ikusi genuen elur maluta _{DP}] vs. [_{DP} elur maluta txiki baino txikiago bat]
CP (infinitival) complements of adjectives are very constrained if not ungrammatical:
(11) ??A difficult to read book (11') *Liburu irakurtzen zaila

ADJACENCY CONSTRAINT

The standard cluster **cannot be dislocated** in (1') - (2') in Basque (cf. (6)).

- (12) *_{t_i} Emakume gehiago-k jotzen dute egoera larritzat [gizon baino].
woman many-ER-ERG consider AUX situation serious man THAN
- (13) *Elur maluta _{t_i} txikiago bat ikusi dugu [txiki baino].
snowflake small-ER one seen have small THAN

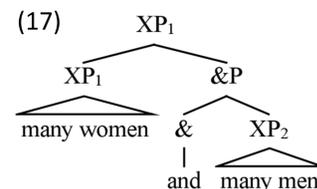
DISTRIBUTION

The standard markers (*than*, *baino*) should be categorized as **coordinating conjunctions**. Evidence: The standard cluster is not a PP, it appears in linguistic contexts where PPs are not allowed.

- (14) [_{DP} The proud (*_{PP} of her work) woman] has come. * ADJECTIVAL MODIFIERS
(14') [_{DP} Emakume (*_{PP} bere lanaz) harroa] etorri da. IN ATTRIBUTIVE POSITION
- (15) [_{DP} a small and beautiful snowflake] ✓ COORDINATED ADJ. ARE ALLOWED
(15') [_{DP} elur maluta txiki eta polit bat] IN ATTRIBUTIVE POSITION
- (16) Many women and men [from Bilbao] ✓ MODIFIERS W/COORDINATED NPS

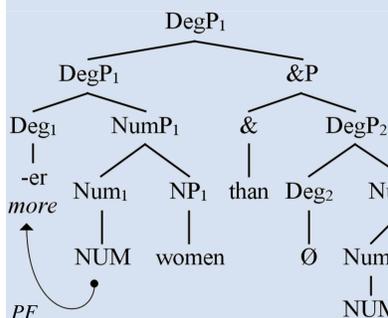
5. COMPARATIVE COORDINATION

- Functional* analysis of comparative markers (-er) (Abney 1987, Kennedy 1999) and gradable predicates (NUM/ADJ).
- Comparative coordination* analysis (Napoli & Nespor 1983, Sáez 1992, Lechner 2004)
- Munn's (1993) *adjunct* analysis of coordination.

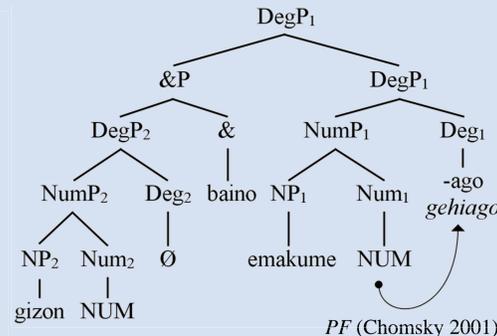


ORDER & SCOPE

(18) More women than men



(18') Gizon baino emakume gehiago



- Correctly predicts (i) the **relative ordering** (surface linearization) of the comparative marker, the standard and the gradable predicate w.r.t the nominal; and
- (ii) the **scope interaction** between the comparative marker and the conjunction.
(19) [_{DegP} More [_{NumP1} women [_{&P} and [_{NumP2} men]]]]

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