

Our research aims at presenting how elliptical constructions in comparative subclauses can be analysed in Hungarian, with particular focus on Comparative Deletion and Comparative Verb Gapping.

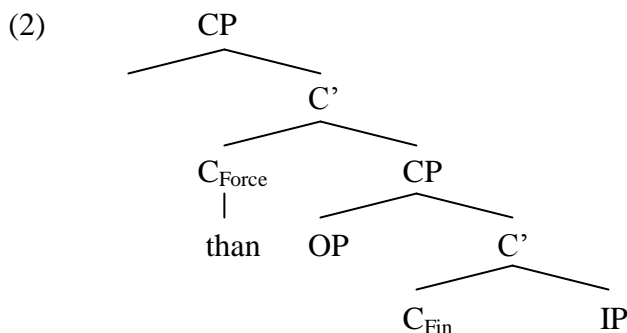
1. The structure of comparatives

(1) Mary is more intelligent [than Peter is *x-much intelligent*].

reference value of comparison: QP in the matrix clause

standard value of comparison: subclause

than. a complementiser (Kenesei 1992a) representing comparative Force (Rizzi 1999) it subcategorises for a CP, to the specifier of which the comparative operator moves via operator movement (Chomsky 1977; Kennedy–Merchant 2000):



the structure of the Left Periphery (Rizzi 1997: 297):

(3) [CP [TopP* [FocP [TopP* [CP]]]]]

In English, the comparative operator is normally covert; however, there are some dialectal differences – (4) is grammatical in New England English:

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

Reasons for operator movement: comparatives obey islands.

Comparative operators are base-generated in [Spec; QP] in the comparative subclause (Kántor 2008c)

Wh-island:

- (5) a. *John killed more dragons than OPx Mary wondered **whether** to kiss [tx ~~dragons~~]
- b. John killed more dragons than OPx Mary wanted to kiss [tx ~~dragons~~]

Complex NP island:

- (6) a. *John killed more dragons than OPx he had outlined **a plan** to kill [tx ~~dragons~~]
- b. John killed more dragons than OPx he planned to kill [tx ~~dragons~~]

Two basic types of comparatives:

- (7) a. The tiger is faster than the cat. *predicative*
b. I have bigger tigers than Peter has. *attributive*

Subcomparatives:

- (8) a. The desk is longer than the rug is wide. *predicative subcomparative*
b. Pico wrote a more interesting novel than he did a play. *attributive subcomparative*
Kennedy and Merchant (2000:131, ex. 77)

2. Parametric variation in the comparative subclause (IE languages)

Two deletion operations: – Comparative Deletion (CD)
– Comparative Verb Gapping (CVG)

parametric setting: languages can be [\pm CD] and [\pm CVG]

these are descriptive parameters, similarly to SVO, SOV etc.

- Comparative Deletion (CD): deletes the AP in predicative comparatives and the DP in attributive comparatives, if it is identical to its antecedent in the matrix clause (cf. Kennedy–Merchant 2000)

- (9) a. Mary is taller than Peter is _____{CD}. (_____{CD} = x-much tall)
b. Susan has bigger cats than Peter has _____{CD}. (_____{CD} = x-much big cats)

English has a [+CD] parameter: CD is obligatory:

- (10) a. *Mary is taller than Peter is tall.
b. *Susan has bigger cats than Peter has big cats.

By contrast, Bulgarian is [–CD]:

- (11) a. Мери по-висока беше от **колкото висок** Питър беше.
Mary taller was than **x-much tall** Peter was
'Mary was taller than Peter.'
b. Жужа по-голяма котка видя, от **колкото голяма котка** Питър къпеше.
Susan bigger cat saw than **x-much big cat** Peter bathed
'Susan has a saw a bigger cat than Peter bathed.'

- Comparative Verb Gapping (CVG): if the operator is deleted, the finite verb must also be deleted

Bulgarian is a [+CVG] language:

– in predicative comparatives:

- (12) Мери по-висока беше от **колкото висок** Питър беше.
Mary taller was than **x-much tall** Peter **was**
(13) *Мери по-висока беше от Питър беше.
Mary taller was than Peter **was**
'Mary was taller than Peter was.'
(14) Мери по-висока беше от Питър.
Mary taller was than Peter
'Mary was taller than Peter.'

4. Hungarian clause structure

Hungarian clause structure:

(23) [CForceP [TopP* [CFinP [TopP* [DistP* [FocP [AspP [VP ...]]]]]]]]]

(Cf. Brody 1990a, 1990b, 1995 (AspP and FocP), É. Kiss 2002, 2006 (DistP, TopP, CP) Kántor 2008a, 2008b (split left periphery))

As for the split left periphery of Hungarian CPs:

- (24) a. [DP [CP Elemért [CP aki látja]]], szóljon neki.
Elmer-ACC who sees notify-IMP-3RD/SING him-DAT
'Whoever sees Elmer, please notify him.'
b. Jelentkezzen [DP [CP Edével [CP aki beszélt]]]
Come.forward-3RD/SING-IMP Ede-INS who talked
'Whoever saw Ede, please come forward.'
Kenesei (1992b: 588)

For further discussion, see Kántor (2008c, 2008d).

5. Deletion in Hungarian comparative subclauses – the data

Hungarian is [-CD] and [+CVG].

- *Comparative Deletion*

- (25) a. Péter sokkal kövérebb, mint Jancsi.
Peter much fatter than Johnny
'Peter is much fatter than Johnny.'
b. Péter sokkal kövérebb, mint (amilyen kövér) Jancsi valaha.is lesz.
Peter much fatter than OP fat Johnny ever will.be
'Peter is much fatter than Johnny will ever be.'
- (26) a. Péter sokkal gyorsabb autót vett, mint Jancsi.
Péter much faster car-ACC bought than Johnny
'Peter bought a much faster car than Johnny.'
b. Péter sokkal gyorsabb autót vett, mint amilyen gyors autót Jancsi vásárolt.
Peter much faster car-ACC bought than OP fast car-ACC Johnny purchased
'Peter bought a much faster car than the one that Johnny purchased.'

- *Comparative Verb Gapping*

- (27) a. Péter sokkal kövérebb volt, mint Jancsi.
Peter much fatter was than Johnny
'Johnny was much fatter than Johnny.'
b. Péter sokkal kövérebb volt, mint amilyen kövér Jancsi volt.
Péter much fatter was than OP fat Johnny was
'Peter was much fatter than Johnny was.'
c. *Péter sokkal kövérebb volt, mint Jancsi volt.
Péter much fatter was than Johnny was
'Peter was much fatter than Johnny was.'

- (28) a. Péter sokkal gyorsabb autót vett, mint Jancsi.
 Peter much faster car-ACC bought than Johnny
 ‘Peter bought a much faster car than Johnny.’
- b. Péter sokkal gyorsabb autót vett, mint amilyen gyors autót Jancsi vett.
 Peter much faster car-ACC bought than OP fast car-ACC Johnny bought
 ‘Peter bought a much faster car, than Johnny.’
- c. *Péter sokkal gyorsabb autót vett, mint Jancsi vett.
 Peter much faster car-ACC bought than Johnny bought
 ‘Peter bought a much faster car, than Johnny.’

CVG and NEW versus GIVEN information:

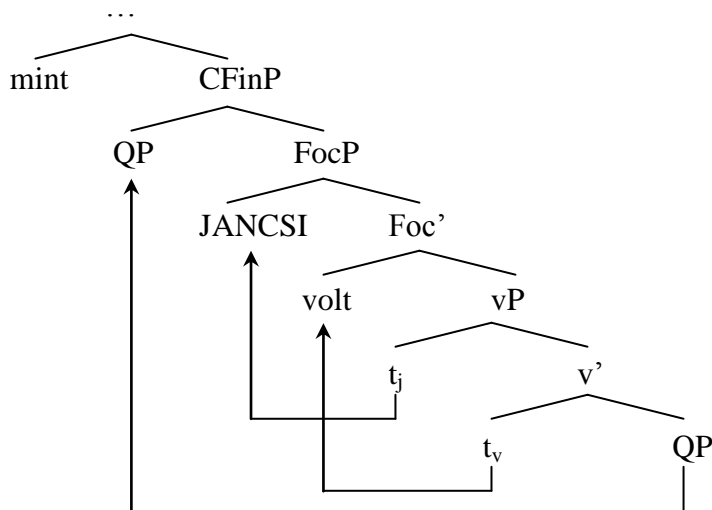
- (29) a. Péter sokkal kövérebb, mint (amilyen/amilyen kövér) Jancsi (valaha.is) lesz.
 Peter much fatter than OP OP fat Johnny ever will.be
 ‘Peter is much fatter than Johnny will ever be.’
- b. Péter kövérebb, mint [?](amilyen) Jancsi lenne, ha élne.
 Peter fatter than OP Johnny be-3RD/SING-COND if live-3RD/SING-COND
 ‘Peter is fatter than Johnny would be, if he were alive.’
- c. Kövérebb vagyok, mint voltam.
 fatter am than I.was
 ‘I am fatter than I was.’
- d. [?]Több almát vettem, mint Péter hámozott.
 More apple-ACC I.bought than Peter peeled
 ‘The number of pears I bought is higher than that of those that Peter peeled.’
- e. Nagyobb macskát láttam, mint [?](amekkora macskát) etetett Péter.
 Bigger cat-ACC I.saw than OP cat-ACC fed Peter
 ‘I saw a bigger than the one that Peter fed.’

6. The solution to Comparative Verb Gapping

The problem of CVG-effects:

- comparative operators are optionally present in the comparative subclause
- if they are absent, deletion of the verb is obligatory
- a constituent can be deleted iff it is GIVEN (e-GIVEN)

- (30) Péter sokkal kövérebb volt, [mint [QP amilyen kövér] Jancsi volt].



Focus: comparatives inherently encode contrast

- (31) a. Max is taller than Felix is.
 b. $\exists d[\neg(d(\text{tall}(\text{felix}))) \ \& \ (d(\text{tall}(\text{max})))]$
 Cf. Klein (1980) and Larson (1988)

Main stress on focussed element followed by reverse Verb-Verb Modifier order in Hungarian:

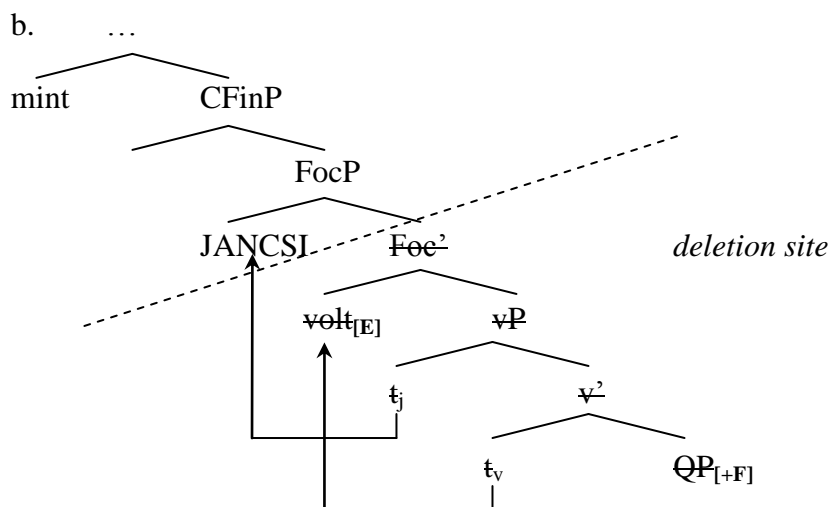
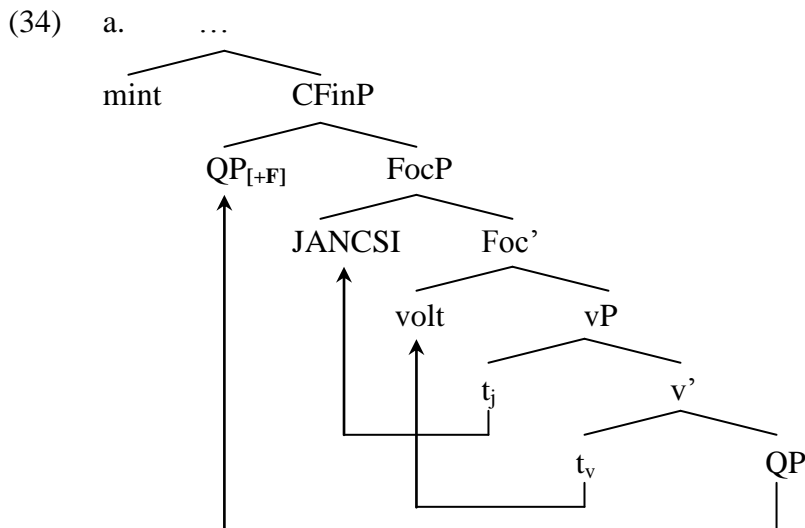
- (32) Aztán megpillantottam egy sokkal nagyobb macskát,
 then VM.noticed-1ST/SING a much bigger cat-ACC
 mint amelyet PÉTER pillantott meg.
 than OP Peter noticed VM
 ‘Then I noticed a much bigger cat than Peter.’

Kennedy and Merchant (2000):

- (33) a. Pico wrote a more interesting novel than he did a play.
 b. than he did [VP write [FP [OP_[+wh] interesting]_x F⁰_[+wh] [DP an t_x play]]]
 c. than he did [VP [VP write [FP [OP_[+wh] interesting]_x F⁰_[+wh] t_i] [DP an t_x play]]]
 (Kennedy and Merchant 2000:131)

“Deletion effectively eliminates the otherwise fatal [+wh] F⁰ head inside VP.”

PF-uninterpretability; the comparative operator’s feature is PF-uninterpretable.



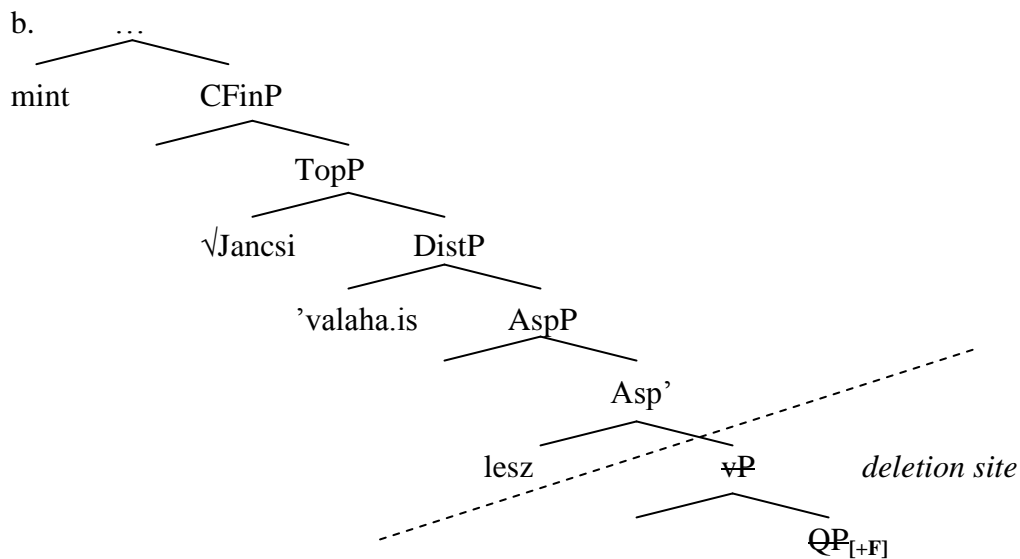
This is sluicing *per definitionem* (cf. Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006).

A strong feature (in the sense of Chomsky 1995) which triggers the movement to the left periphery (specCP) can be deleted at PF (e.g., IP-deletion) obviating the need for movement to C. This allows the bare feature to move to C at LF, not at PF. See Merchant (2001) for further discussion.

Why Foc' is the constituent that is deleted after all? Because this is the constituent that is targeted by sluicing in Hungarian (Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006).

Why isn't Foc' deleted in (28)?

- (35) a. Péter sokkal kövérebb, [mint √Jancsi 'valaha.is lesz].
 Peter much fatter than Johnny ever will.be
 'Peter is much fatter than Johnny will ever be.'



Here the maximal given constituent possible is vP after the verb has moved out.

Tendency of deleting the maximal given constituent possible

(Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006:254, see also Merchant 2008)

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